THE DOOR OF Heaven

Opened and Shut.

OPENED to the Ready and Prepared.

SHUT againſt the Unready and Unprepared.

OR, A

DISCOURSE

Concerning

The Abſolute Neceſſity of a Timely Preparation for a Happy Eternity.

By *JOHN FOX*, Miniſter of the Goſpel, and Author of the Diſcourſe concerning *Time, and the End of Time.*

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TO THE

Reader.

READER,

UPon the often and earneſt Deſire and Solicitation of ſome ſober Perſons, that heard theſe Sermons Preached, I have adventured to make this Plain Diſcourſe (*about Timely Preparation for Heaven*) *Publick. And if thou art Reconciled to, and really in Love with Truth and Holineſs; here is that put into thine Hand, (which if God adde his Bleſſing) will ſtir up thy pure Mind to greater ſeriouſneſs and diligence in the matters of thy Soul. Now, that it may conduce to thy ſpiritual and eternal Advantage, is his Deſire who Prayeth for thy Souls welfare,*

MAT. 25. 10.

And they that were Ready went in with Him to the Marriage, and the Door was ſhut.

THE Thing of greateſt moment are by moſt men little believed, leſs conſidered, till it be too late; That beſides this preſent World, (which muſt have its period) there is another World, of an eternal duration: And that according to our choice, life, and doing here, will our doom and eternal habitation be in the World to come; ſo that there is an indiſpenſible Neceſſity to make ready for a bleſſed Life of Immortality. This grand Concern, the Parable of the ten Virgins warnes and alarums us unto. In which Parable are two parts.

Firſt, the Churches Preparation to meet Chriſt, called here *The Bridegroom*, from the firſt to the fifth verſe.

Secondly, *the Bridegroomes coming forth to meet them*, from the fifth to the twelfth

verse. The Text falls under the fe[illegible] *viz. The Bridegroomes coming to fetc[illegible] his Bride*: O welcom day! The words [illegible] as a Glass or bright Sun-beam, to represent the different estate of believers and unbelievers, wise and foolish Virgins, at Christs comeing by Death or Judgement.

In which observe three things.

1. The preparation of the wise Virgins, *They were ready*.

2. Their Welcom and Admission to the Marriage, *They went in with him*, i. e. *into the Presence-Chamber of the King of Glory*.

3. We have the doleful Rejection and Exclusion of the foolish Virgins, *And the Door was shut*.

The Doctrine that I shall Collect and Handle from the words is this, *They and only such who are graciously qualified and prepared for Christ in this World, shall enjoy eternal Fellowship and Communion with Christ in the other World.*

The greatest part of our happiness that we shall have in Heaven lies in this, *That we shall be with Christ*. Dost thou desire a better Countrey?

...? *viz. to come ſafe to Heaven:* ...thine eye ever upon thine end, and ...w that here life is gotten or loſt to Eter...ty. Sinner, do not deceive thy ſelf, to hope for Heaven, and do the work of Hell: if thou doſt expect to go in with Chriſt, and enjoy God and glory hereafter, daily uſe the means, and go in the way to Heaven here. There is a congruity between the way and the end: They anſwer one another, as face anſwereth face in the water; or as the Wax and the Seal, the Voice and the Eccho do anſwer each other. If thy heart and life cry Heaven, Heaven, then thy End or Death will cry Heaven; but if thy Life and Practice cry hell, hell, thine End like the Eccho to the Voice will cry hell, hell. As men brew they drink, and receive wages according to their work; and as you ſowe you reap: the Harveſt is the end of the World; they that were ready went in, not one more. Heaven conſiſteth partly in the fitneſs and preparation of the ſoul and body for that bleſſed Society above. The Paradiſe of God would be a Priſon, may I not ſay a hell, to the impious and unholy.

Sore eyes cannot behold the Sun without grief, Swine will not ſtay in the moſt plea-

ſant Meadows: hence, no work ſo [illegible] Chriſts, no time ſo uncomfortable and [illegible] ous to wicked men, as abiding under Chri[illegible] wings in his Ordinances.

Before I proceed to ſpeak to the ſeveral branches in the Doctrine, I muſt enter a Caveat or Caution.

Firſt, this Meetneſs, Fitneſs, and Preparation for Heaven, is not to be underſtood in a way of Popiſh Purgation or Merits, *viz.* by *Prayers, Acts of Munificence, Almes, Pilgrimages, Penance, Purgatory, &c.* The Reward is of Grace, not of Debt, or Deſert, for *all our Righteouſneſſes are but as filthy rags; and when we have done all we are but unprofitable Servants* (ſaith our Saviour,) *Iſa.* 64.6. *Luke* 17 10. Our good hope and everlaſting conſolation is through grace.

Secondly, the readineſs is not to be underſtood, as if all that ſhall go to Heaven with Chriſt, have an inherent, ſinleſs, and perſonal Perfection; As Stars have their twinklings, and Diamonds their flaws, and the beſt Gold doth need ſome grain of allowance, ſo the moſt eminent Chriſtians have their frailties and mixtures of corruption. *Solomon* challengeth the whole world, when he ſaith, *Who can ſay I have made my heart clear; I am pure from*

...riests, whose Employment is ...nd divine praise, *Rev.* 1.6. *Psal.* 6. ... *Pet.* 2 5,9.

Fourthly, they have Royal Attendants, the glorious Angels; these Watchers, who are great in strength, stand as Sentinels at their doors to protect their Persons, day and night while they live: And they must convey their souls thorough the Devils Territories safe to the Place of their everlasting habitation, after they are dead, *Psal.* 34. 8. *Heb.* 1. 14. *Luke* 16. 22. If you are by Grace prepared for Glory, God is your God, and this is your Guard.

Fifthly, they have a Royal Law, which is the Rule and Standard of their Obedience to God, *Jam.* 2. 8. The Writing was the Writing of God, who was both the Dictator and the Scribe, *Exod.* 32. 16. where note, that the Scripture is the Word of God, *John* 10. 35.

Sixthly, they have Royal Apparel, a Royal presence, and belong to a Royal City: and when they go in with Christ, they shall be on the Throne-Royal, and have the Crown-Royal.

It cannot be denied, but that they are set apart for God, and fitted for his Presence,

Psal.

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Psal.4.3. God hath set apart the [illegible] *godly for himself.* Mirè segregavit c[illegible]cio excellentiæ, (*saith one upon the Place*) [illegible] hath gloriously, wonderfully, miraculou[illegible] separated to himself the godly man. Here Note.

That we do not make our selves fit, or meet for Heaven, God must do it. *Who can make his heart clean?* we may wash the out-side of the Cup; God must clense that which is within, *viz.* the heart, from wickedness. *I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

Christians are made fit by Redemption, by Vocation, by Adoption, by Justification, by Sanctification.

This should cause the godly to wonder at the Power of Divine Grace. If a King cast his favour on a mean subject or slave, and prefer him to a great and honourable Office, yet he cannot change his nature, and give him fitness for that place: But God doth not only give a Kingdom to his Saints, but inwardly adapt, and fit them for that Kingdom. And as none had right to the Land of *Canaan* but the *Israelites*, so none have right to Heaven but the Saints; (but of this more afterwards).

SECT.

SECT. II.

Secondly, *This Readineſs is in the day and time of Life, not after death. Oh that thou hadſt known in this thy day* (ſaid Chriſt to the Jewes) *the things that belong to thy peace.* There is a time known and appointed of God, after which they ſhall never repent and be converted, who have enjoyed and lived under the means of grace, and are not converted. 'Tis true, the eternal God is not limited to any term or means, but man is limited to time and means. Sinner, thou haſt a great work to do, a long journey to go, and many and mighty adverſaries to divert and hinder thee; thy VVork is to prepare for Death and Judgment, which is very near; thy Voyage or Journey is to the everlaſting VVorld, Proviſion muſt be made while in the way. To apply this a little, and to quicken you to husband the precious Talent of Time in order to Eternity. I ſhall propoſe three things; Firſt, conſider how ſhort and uncertain our being in the VVorld is. Secondly, as life is ſhort, ſo the continuance of the means of grace will not be long. Thirdly, when gray haires, old age, ſickneſs, (*Solomons*

evil

evil day) comes, that is not ſo fit a
ſeaſon to prepare for Heaven: Firſt,
ber how ſhort and uncertain thy being
VVorld is; *Our life is but a vapour*, Ja
4. 14. that ſoon appeareth and diſappeareth
diſperſed aſſoon as raiſed. 'Tis a little ſpot
of time between two Eternities. One of the
Ancients doubteth, whether to call it a dying
life, or a living death: And if our life
(which is a breathing death) had bin leſs
then a vapour, it had bin nothing at all. The
Pſalmiſt deſcribes Man as *Graſs*, Pſal. 90. *In
the Morning it flouriſheth, in the Evening it is
cut down, and withereth.*

Man continueth but a very ſhort time, his
life is but a ſpan long, or but a day long, like
Jonah's Gourd, came up in a night, and pe-
riſhed in a night. The firſt ſtep man ſets up-
on the ſtage of this VVorld, he is going out of
the VVorld. The Naturaliſts ſpeak of a Fly
they call *Ephemeron*, a creature of one day,
which cometh forth in the Morning, is very
active about Noon, but when the Sun decli-
neth, it declineth too, and ſets with the ſetting
of the Sun.

Man is an *Ephemeron*, a creature of one day.
The Ancient of days ſets up our Glaſs in
Heaven, there it is running, and we ſee not
how

s to an end. Think, O devout ne fugacity and swiftness of thy re below, the Line and Lease of Life quickly be out: It is but a point of me that we live, while we do but turn, Immortality is present. This present Life is but the place of our Inne and Sepulchre; The Beginning of this Life is but the *Exordium* of Death, *Vitæ hujus Principium statim Mortis est Exordium.* We are carried every moment of time to the *End of Time.* Our Life is but like one sailing; he who doth sail, whether he stand or sit, whether he sleep, watch or walk, he is carried nearer the Port; may we not say with old *Jacob*, Gen. 47. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been:* where we have his Account cast up; God is the great Landlord of our time, the Lease is for life, not years but days, not many days but few. *Life* (said one) *is a Rose, which if we view in its growth the Cold nips it, the Heat withers it, the Wind shakes it, be it never so fair it withers:* Another saith, *Life is a counterfeit, what if the Colours be fair, and the Resemblance near, the Shadows of Death, and the Curtains of the Grave will darken all;* 'Tis a Play, We enter at our Birth, and Act all our Life, presently there is an *Exit*, or end,

and

and away we go. One being asked [illegible] Life, he ſhews himſelf a little, and hid[illegible] ſelf again, his meaning was this, Our L[illegible] but a little ſhew, no ſooner are we ſeen, b[illegible] immediately we are hid and gone. O ſleepy and ſecure ſinner, think of the certainty of Death, the danger of thy Soul, the nearneſs and length of Eternity, and the Neceſſity of preparing in a moment of time for an everlaſting eſtate. Die and leave the VVorld we muſt, in the Grave there is no work, after Death the Judgement, *Heb.*9.27. Sin poiſons the Arrow in the Quiver of the King of Terrours, and puts the Sythe into Deaths hand that cuts us down. Methinks Sin ſpeaks to the ſeveral Generations of men whom Death hath conquered, as *David* to the Prieſt who had eſcaped *Sauls* bloody ſword, *I have been the occaſion of all this.* Sin and Death are coupled together, *Rom.*8.2.

Secondly, as Life is ſhort, ſo the continuance of the means of Grace will not be long. There are many faithful, able, painful Miniſters have Preached their laſt; and an abundance, yea, multitudes of Sinners, time-lo'ers, that have heard their laſt; and this will be my caſe and yours in a little time. The Prophets, do they live for ever?

We

have but a little time to intreat and to
with you about your ſouls, to call, in-
and perſwade you to come to Chriſt, and
accept of mercy: and which Miniſter or Ser-
mon ſhall be the laſt thou ſhalt hear, who can
tell? *There are ſix days*, ſaid the Maſter of
the Synagogue, *Luke* 13. *in which men ought
to work, in them therefore come and be healed.
We muſt ſeek the Lord while he may be found*,
Iſa. 55. 6. *For behold now is the appointed time,
now is the day of ſalvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. More-
over, as the Miniſtry and outward means is un-
certain, ſo the time of the Spirits working
with the Word is uncertain, *My Spirit ſhall
not always ſtrive with man*: the Spirit is
compared to the Wind, who can tell when
the Wind will blow, and how long it will
continue its ſweet gales to convey us to glory.
The Door of grace is yet open to loſt and
undone ſinners, who have ſlighted mercy.
God did not deal ſo with the Angels that
fell, they ſinned, and the Lord caſt them down,
and ſhut the Gate of Glory upon them imme-
diately. But the day for the things of thy
peace is continued. Its ſaid, the Devil is
buſie becauſe his time is ſhott, *Rev.* 12. 12.
And ſhall we be worſe then the Devil: The
time is ſhort, 1 *Cor.* 7. 27. *The Angel will*

ers

ere long ſwear by him that liveth that time [illegible] *be no more.* You that are travelling towa[rd] Heaven muſt make haſte, the Workman tha[t] ſets a time for his task, liſtens to the Clock, and counts the houres. We have a great task and a ſhort time, redeem it in order to Eternity. This is Gods houre, and this is mine; what I do for my dear ſoul, what I lay up for Eternity muſt be now done or never, O remember, its but an houre, but a day, and this will quickly paſs away: In what anguiſh of ſoul, deſpair and torment, will many wiſh for thoſe houres again; the loſs of ſo many opportunities for the gaining of Heaven, will be as ſo many drops of gall and poiſon in thy honey. *It makes me weep,* ſaid one, *when my Hour-Glaſs is beſide me, to ſee every ſpeck of ſand to follow other ſo ſpeedily*; therefore the Apoſtle exhorts *to Redeem time*; *I muſt work,* ſaid our dear Lord, *while it is day,* John 9.4. Sinner, if Death ſhould come, and find thee unready, thou art undone ſoul and body for ever.

The time of gray Hairs, old Age, Sickneſs, is not the fitteſt ſeaſon to prepare for Heaven. When thou comeſt to a Bed of Languiſhing, and thy ſtrength waſted, thy breath ſhort, doſt thou think to Cough-up, *Lord have mercy upon*

my soul, and that will be sufficient to pre-
serve thee for Christ, and bring thee to Hea-
ven. Besides, it is almost a wonder to hear of any one converted to God at the last gasp, when men are ready to enter into the Gulf of Eternity. In the Word we have one only instance of the Thief upon the Cross; but remember his Conversion was one of the Wonders of Christs Passion; when Christ was on the Cross, the Sun was darkned from the sixth houre to the ninth houre, the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain, the Earth did quake, the Rocks rent, the Graves opened, the Bodies of Saints which slept arose, and a notorious sinner was converted, all which is wonderful. *Austin* being sent to give his judgement of one that had delayed, and put off his repentance, returned this Answer, *Non dico damnabitur, non dico salvabitur*, I do not say he shall be damned, I do not say he shall be saved, but repent while it is well; Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation may depend upon this day. *Tamerlain*, when he laid siege to a City or Fort, first Erected a white Flag, thereby offering Peace; the second a Red, to signify blood; thirdly, he shewed them a black Engine, denoting devastation and destruction: The Holy Ghost saith, *To day if*

you

you will hear his voice, harden not your
There was one reſolved to kill *Julius C*
ſuch a day; the Night before a Friend ſent him
a Letter to acquaint him with it; but being
at ſupper and buſie, *I will not look upon it now*,
(ſaith he) *to morrow is a new day*: The next
day when he ſhould have read the Letter he
was ſtabbed. God ſends thee a Letter, a Meſ-
ſage from Heaven, *To day hear his voice*, to
day repent and leave thy ſins, or for ever to
Hell.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, *Let us now enquire what this Pre-
paration to go in with Chriſt is.* And I wiſh
that all who read this Diſcourſe may under-
ſtand it, not onely notionally and ſpeculative-
ly, but alſo heartily and experimentally.

In Anſwer to this third particular, here is
ſomething Negatively, and ſomething Poſi-
tively, and both in reference to believers and
unbelievers.

Negatively, Preparation for Chriſt and
Heaven, doth not lie or conſiſt in any thing
that is natural, or acquired by mans utmoſt
induſtry. Let the Qualifications, Endow-
ments, Emprovements and Attainments of
Men be never ſo rare and excellent, while
without

...ut ſupernatural regenerating-grace, ...y cannot be fit and prepared for imme...iate and eternal fellowſhip with God. To explicate this, take theſe four Particulars.

Firſt, Readineſs for Chriſt and Heaven doth not conſiſt in being Virgins, *i. e.* Church-Members, and in having the ſpecious leaves of Profeſſion. There are more than a few who pretend to and profeſs the true Religion, that are carnal, rotten and falſe in that Religion: All in the viſible Church, that are ſealed with the Sign and Sacrament of Initiation, are not made fit for divine Communion. *Nicodemus* was circumciſed, yet not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven: *Judas* was an Apoſtle and Preacher, but the ſon of perdition: *Simon Magus* was baptized, and in the gall of bitterneſs.

Many think, 'tis ſufficient to ſave them, that they were born in *England*, and deſcended of Religious or Proteſtant Parents, that they keep their Church, ſay their Prayers, receive the Lord's Supper, and procure their abſolution when dying: The unbelieving *Jews* gloried in their External Rites and Priviledges, crying out, *The Temple of the Lord*: and becauſe they had their

Prieſts, and Sacrifices and could go up [to Je-] *ruſalem* to worſhip, they were (as [they] thought) the happieſt people in the whol[e] world. How many Atheiſts and haters of God and Holineſs, have been Baptized? Reſt not here; for he is not a *Jew* that is one outwardly, *Rom.* 2, 28. *Gal.* 6. 13. God calls the Circumciſed *Iſraelites Kine of* Baſhan, *and the Children of the* Ethiopian, *Am.*4.1,9,7.

2. Neither doth it conſiſt in trimming of *Lamps*, i.e. in External duties and Religious Acts, which to the view of the world may be ſplendid and very plauſible. *Bona opera non faciunt bonum virum, ſed vir bonus facit opera bona. Luther.* Good works do not make a good man, but a good man makes good works. Unregenerate men their ſervices proceed from the ſame principles that their ſins do. The Tree muſt be good before the fruit can be good, the outſide of the cup or platter may be clean; men may hear the word gladly, ſo did *Herod*, and pray frequently, ſo did the *Phariſees*, and thoſe hypocrites, *Iſa.* 58. Men may receive the Lord's Supper, ſo did *Judas*, and do much more, and yet be far from the Kingdom of heaven: More-

over

they may be exact in their ſecond table ties, wrong no man, be Juſt and Righte-ous, give unto *Caſar* the things that are *Caſar*'s,(ſo were ſome of the heathen) and yet be ſtrangers to God, the new Birth, Union and Communion with Chriſt,with-out which no man can be capacitated, and prepared for the divine preſence.

3ly,neither doth this readineſs for Chriſt lie in being of ſuch a party,and opinion,or in being hot and zealous for ſuch modes and forms of Religion and Worſhip: A Man may be Epiſcopal,a Presbyterian, an Independent, an Anabaptiſt, and a ſtran-ger to the life and power of Religion. The *Jews*, high Prieſts, and Elders: the Scribes and Phariſees were zealous for *Mo-ſes* Law, the Cuſtome and Traditions of their Fathers,but the worſt Enemies Chriſt had. ThePrelate of*Rome* ſticks not to Impoſe on and Depoſe Princes, and their bloody deludedVaſſals can murder&ſhed the blood of Proteſtants out of cruel religious zeal.

4ly, Neither doth it lie in mental Il-lumination and excellent rare parts, gifts, common grace, and good opinion, and approbation of the beſt, moſt ſerious and Judicious men; A Man's Mind and In-

tellectuals may be adorned with rare ons; he may be able to dispute most read accurately and profoundly about Theological principles; he may Pray and Preach like an Angel, & be in high esteem in the Church; and yet have nothing in him to intitle him to Christ, and prepare him for heaven. There is shining dross and Counterfeit Silver which deceiveth many, as a *Bristol*-Stone may shew and shine like a Diamond, and a Counter like a piece of gold; the Picture of a man may be like a man, and Atrificial Flowers are as fair, and look like Natural Flowers; so common grace hath the resemblance of saving grace; So that some question whether it differs in *specie* or degrees only. There are partial and almost Christians, who seem to bid fair for Christ and Heaven, as *Judas*, *Demas* and many others. And who can tell how high and eminent men may be in office & profession, how sound and orthodox in Judgment and opinion, how deep in Conviction and Contrition, how regular in Conversation, how zealous, and warm in Affection, how forward in duties of Piety and Charity, and ready to suffer, how lifted up with aiery titillati-

tions of Joy, ſips and taſts of comfort ſolting from thoughts of free grace, and miſapplying the promiſes, and the ſuperficial tranſient operations of the Spirit: And but halve it with God, and fall ſhort of heaven: How much alike were theſe Virgins (to ſay nothing of their Agreement in number and name) they were all in ſociety, they were all aſleep, they were all awakened and rowſed up, they all went to work and trim'd their Lamps, they all went out to meet the Bridegrom: and the fooliſh came to the door with, *Lord, Lord, open to us:* If good words, and wiſhes, and *O let me dye the Death of the righteous* will ſave men they would all go to heaven. Many ſpin ſmall, and make hypocriſy ſeem a good Web, and go through the Market as Saints among men; and yet ſteal quietly to hell without Obſervation: *So eaſie it is to deceive men* (ſaid an Eminent Divine) *'Tis doleful to think and ſee ſuch Troops and Droves of prophane, ignorant, preſumptuous men and women, go down merrily to hell with a golden dream and hope of Heaven:* Like the Fiſh that ſport and play in *Jordan*, and then fall into the dead Sea; like *Haman* that went chearfully to *Heſter*'s Banquet, not

knowing his life was the mark
aim'd at: How many ſecure ſouls
in ſin go out of the world, and never awa
till they come to hell.

Having ſpoken ſomething in the Negative concerning this fitneſs and readineſs for Chriſt: I proceed now to the poſitive part of my Anſwer, wherein it doth conſiſt.

1. There is an initial, or an habitual readineſs for heaven, and there is alſo a more actual fitneſs to go in with Chriſt.

As ſoon as a man is taken out of his natural ſoil, and the ſeed of God is ſown in his heart, he is habitually ready for his future happineſs. If a Believer ſhould die the firſt day of his Converſion, he would certainly go to Heaven, witneſs the Thief upon the Croſs. But truly there are many dear Children of God not actually prepared, becauſe their ſpiritual eſtate is not ſo well ſetled. 'Tis a great duty for all that are eſpouſed to Chriſt, to be in a conſtant and continual readineſs to meet Chriſt, and have immediate Communion with him: but ſad experience proves it is not ſo. A Woman may be eſpouſed to another, and yet ſhe may be ſometimes not ready to meet him; her Ornamenns may

be

and her foul apparel on. To Re- this I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, when the Chriſtian is not ready.

Secondly, when he is actually ready.

Firſt, when the Believers ſoul, like *Hezekiah*'s Sun, is gone ſome degrees backward; *i.e.* under remarkable declinings; And the beſt things in him are ready to die, *viz.* grace, inward joy, peace, old experiences, godly ſorrow are ready to die. If the firſt warm, burning, flaming love of the Eſpouſals be leſsned, and much abated towards Chriſt, ſo that the Man's heart doth vigorouſly go forth after ſenſual Objects, and the dead child is put in the place of the living child; is he fit to go in with Chriſt? If Grace be under remarkable decays, and witherings, and the Souls Beauty departed, Can a Man then welcom Chriſt? What cauſe have thouſands to cry out with the Prophet, *My leanneſs, my leanneſs*: Is it not Autumn or Winter in many a ſoul; How little life and love have you, and much ado to maintain it. I heard a good Woman, in a deſpairing condition, complain of want of natural affection to her Husband and Children. And may we not with holy *Bradford* weep for want of love to

our deareſt Lord, and embracing ſom of a ſtranger. If the Wives affe be withdrawn from her Husband's Per is ſhe fit now to appear before him, when ſhe hath no heart to receive him? Therefore ſtrengthen the things that are ready to die, blow up the ſpark of love into a flame, and thou mayſt ſay, *Come, Lord Jeſus.*

Secondly, when the poor Chriſtian, being under deſertion, is doubtful of his eternal condition, and cannot tell what will be his place, when he leaves the World he is unfit; when thick Miſts ſurround us, and black clouds cover us, the many ſinking fears, jealouſies and damping doubts about the love of Chriſt render us unready. This is the caſe of many a ſoul who hath made choice of God to be his, and wonders at his love to him, yet is ready to ſpeak as the Church, *Zion ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me,* Iſa. 49. 14. *My ſoul is caſt down,* ſaith *David, within me, all his billows paſs over me, hath God forgotten to be gracious?* I doubt my heart is not upright, that my foundation is not ſound, that I ſhall be ſhut out of Heaven, ſaith the deſponding ſoul. *Hezekiah,* though he walked before God with a perfect

heart, yet bitterly complained that he was cut off. A very holy and learned Minister complains thus, *I have often disputed, whether or no I knew any thing of Christianity, except the letter of the Name.*

The Woman in Mr. *Bolton* said, *I have been the Mother of Nine Children, and have born them with as much pain as most Women, yet I could be contented to bear the same pain every day, that I have endured with all my Children, to be assured of my Part in Christ.* Another cried out, *He could be contented that his body should burn in Hell a thousand years, so that he might be assured of the least favour from God afterwards. And will you not pity me,* saith Mrs. *Drake, that must burn in Hell for ever.* Sirs, in a time of desertion, when God hides his face, and Heaven is out of sight, the Child of Light walks in darkness, the soul is not ready. The thoughts of God are terrible. *I remembred God, and was troubled,* saith *David, I sink, the deep waters are come into my soul. The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrours of God do set themselves in array against me,* Job 6. 4. *O pity me, my friends,* Job 19. Another walking in the Field

(ſeeing a Fly) cried out, *This* [illegible] *armed with the wrath of God* [illegible]. Now when the trembling ſoul apprehends it ſelf to hang like an equal ballance between two Eternities, and cannot tell whether he ſhall go up or down, live or die, be ſaved or damned; he is not fit to ſhoot the Gulf: This made *David* pray *Pſal.* 39. *ult. Spare me a little before I go hence and be no more.*

Here Note, That there is a double Deſperation, *A Deſperation of Infidelity*, and *A Deſperation of Extremity*: The former, *viz.* A total and perpetual Deſperation, none of God's Elect ones ſhall fall under: but the latter, the Deſperation of Extremity (which doth cure their ſtupidity, and provoke and prompt them to the uſe of the means) they are obnoxious to: They are ſometimes brought very low in their ſouls. *Luther*, by reaſon of the trouble of his mind wiſht he had never bin a man. The Chriſtian ſits ſolitary as a Widow forſaken, his ſighs are many, and his heart is faint, when God covers himſelf with a cloud. This made a godly Woman dying (whoſe Evidences for Heaven could not be read) pray, *Lord, let me not go to*

the

where the wicked are, for I never [illegible] them in my life.

Thirdly, after some sad fall, and when a man is under some violent temptation, or passion he is unready. A good man may be under the power of some sudden, hot and sinful passion, and assaulted with an hellish temptation, he may be tempted to curse and blaspheme God, to destroy himself; he may be bereaved of his Reason and Understanding, and be ragingly mad: Passion is the Law of the soul, and *brevis insania*, a short madness: *Job* and *Jeremiah* in their passion did both curse the day of their birth; *Jonas* told God *he did well to be angry.* Moreover, after a Christian hath fallen into some gross foul sin, God may frown and write bitter things against him, fill his conscience with terrour, hang him over hell, and threaten to remove him out of his sight: till he hath renewed his Repentance. A foul fall doth so grieve the Spirit, that it may make God carry himself toward his as if he were an enemy. God doth deal with his for their great transgressions, as *David* with *Absalom*, who commanded him out of his sight, 2 *Sam.* 14.24. In this sad and deplorable

case.

caſe, Evidences for heaven are blu[illegible] all old Experiences of the Love and [illegible] of God are under ground. *David* af[illegible] his fall was as a dead man, and prayed, *Caſt me not away from thy Preſence*, Pſal. 51. 11.

Fourthly, when a Man hath omitted known and commanded duties, let down his Watch and neglected his Lord's Work; and falls a nodding, or into a Lethargy, (as theſe Virgins did) till rouſed up with the Cry of Midnight, he is not prepared to go in with Chriſt. If a Man's Conſcience draweth up a black Bill of Indictment againſt him, for the neglect of the moſt weighty and Important duties, he is no more fit to meet Chriſt, than *Adam* after he had eaten the forbidden fruit, or a Steward who had much betruſted him to improve for his Lord's uſe, and had let all ſeaſons go wherein he might have traded and gain'd ſomewhat for him. How can he appear before him when no fair account may be ſeen; ſo the Lord hath intruſted thee with many Talents, Grace, Parts, Time, Strength, Health Means, *&c.* And you are not Lords but Stewards of all theſe? How can you with comfort and confidence ſtand before Chriſt, if that be neglected,

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it is with many a Christian, which ...loſt that vigour, zeal, activity and forwardneſs for the Work of God that once he had. Hence come thoſe ſad Alarms, ſtings and convictions of Conſcience, ſhakings and ſinkings of ſpirit under the ſenſe of guilt.

And is not this the caſe of many Virgins? ſo that if Chriſt ſhould arreſt, and ſummon them by death, and call them to *reddere rationem*, give an Account, how many muſt Anſwer, *Not ready, Lord, my work is not done.* O then betimes do your work, and ſet things right in your ſouls every day.

Secondly, *When is a Chriſtian actually ready?*

Anſw. A Chriſtian is actually ready when he hath thoſe rare and gracious qualifications of the wiſe Virgins, (*viz.*) his Veſſel clean, and the Oyl in his Lamp and Veſſel, *i.e.* The Spirit of Chriſt and the graces of the Spirit: which are called Rows of Jewels, Chains of Gold, and Rivers of Living Water. This the is Anointing, 1 *John* 2.27. That Oyl upon *Aaron*'s Head which ran down to the Skirts of his Garment: Chriſt the head of influences (of whom *Aaron* was a Type) was Anoint-

ed

ed above his Fellows, and of his Saints receive grace for grace, *John* 1.

But more particularly,

First, when a Christian (being past from nature to grace) can prove by the Word that infallible truth, that he is in a state of Salvation, and hath therefore good hope, through grace, that his soul is safe.

When *Noah* was shut up in the *Ark* he was out of danger, and prepared for the deluge, and could not be drowned, *&c.*

When a Believer is gotten into Christ, he hath shot the Gulf, and cannot be damned, *Rom.* 8. 1. If thine affection be espoused to the Lord Jesus, and divorced from all others, so that thou hast accepted him for thine Husband, and given him thine heart, thou canst not fall short of heaven, or miss of going in with Christ. Sinner, do not count upon a Kingdom of glory and eternal Salvation, without a sound Conversion. Read what Christ spake to his own Disciples, Mat. 18. 3. *Verily, I say unto you, except you be Converted, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* : What more plain than the Doctrine Christ Preach't to *Nicodemus*, *Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God,*

he

enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,
3. 3. Why then ſhouldſt thou hope,
expect to enter into Life, who doſt
hide and harbour God's Enemies, and art
yet in thy ſins. Chriſtian, hath thy renew-
ed heaven born-ſoul the Impreſs of the di-
vine Image on it? *Cæſar*'s coyn had *Cæſar*'s
Image; Is holineſs to the Lord engraven
upon the heart? Haſt thou that divine
drop that can ſwim againſt the Stream of
corrupt nature. God is reſolved that not
one grain of ſaving grace ſhall go to hell:
Certainly, thou art a choſen Veſſel and rea-
dy, when ever Chriſt ſhall call to go in with
him to the Marriage. The riches of glory
are the inheritance of the Saints, and if thou
haſt a mind to ſee the very Picture of the
inviſible God, look upon a pious, humble,
holy man: There is a reſplendent beauty
on the Believer, no Son ſo much like a Fa-
ther, no Daughter ſo like her Mother as the
Saint is like God. What is brave Silken
habit upon the body, Ear-rings, Jewels up-
on, the Neck Plaited Hair, Curls, Towers,
Spots, and Paints on the face and forehead,
to a Sanctified holy heart? The Church is
glorious within, there is that in the Chriſti-
an (*viz.* the new creature) that can call
God

God Father; Holineſs is the A[illegible] heaven, the Harbinger of heaven; we [illegible] ſee the harveſt of glory in the ſeed of grace. Grace is glory in its nonage, and glory is grace grown up to its perfect ſtature: The time cannot be long between a Chriſtians Converſion and his Coronation.

Secondly, When a believer is gotten into the ſuburbs of glory by Communion with God, and his heart is ſincerely ſet to pleaſe and honor him; when it is thus, he may ſay with *Jacob*, *This is no other but the houſe of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.* 'Tis real Acquaintance and Communion with Chriſt, and conformity to Chriſt, muſt make us ready. Canſt thou take the greateſt complacency in pleaſing God, and ſay of it as the Martyr, of his priſon, *This is better than any Pleaſure, than any Paradiſe*, I pronounce thee ready for the divine Preſence. When a Man hath a ſingle eye to make Gods Glory his mark, & is ſometimes taken into the mount of divine Communion, he is certainly prepared for the viſion and eternal fruition of God above. But on the contrary, if thou art a ſtranger to God and unacquainted with Chriſt, and the fellowſhip of the Spirit, he will ſay to thee at the laſt

...y, as to the unready foolish Virgins, *...know you not*, *Mat.* 25. 12. what I shall say more to this question shall be in the Application.

SECT. IV

The fourth Branch of the Doctrine assigns, and shews *the Reasons why those that are ready shall go in with Christ*. Upon which the necessity of our preparing will plainly appear.

The Reasons respect God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Spirit, and Believers themselves.

The Reasons that respect God, are 1. From the eternal purpose of God. 2. From the pure Love of God. 3. The sure promise of God.

2. From Christ. 1. His Relation to them. 2. His Obligation to them. 3. His Prayer for them. 4. The Dignity and honour of Christ.

3. From the Spirit. 1. The Sanctification of the Spirit. 2. The habitation of the Spirit.

4. From Believers, and the right that they have to heaven. 1. They have a purchased

chaſed right. 2. An hereditary right. 3. A right of fitneſs.

1. This divine qualification of Saints for Heaven is from the purpoſe of God, which is as unalterable as God himſelf. Immediate Communion with God in heaven is that happy and ſubline End Believers are appointed unto, Faith, Repentance and an innocent pious life of conformity to God is the direct way and means to come to, and obtain that end. The way to the Temple of Honour, is through the Temple of Vertue.

He that aſcends the holy hill of God muſt have clean hands. Man by nature is in a corrupt and curſed State of damnation: and not only disjoyned from God, but alienated from God, and there can be no fellowſhip without friendſhip. Man hates God in his heart, and two cannot walk together until they be agreed. *Amos* 3. God and ſin cannot be together, if ſo the lapſed Peccant Angels might have ſtayed in Heaven: So then, that which caſt them out muſt needs keep us out. The beſt part of corrupt man is againſt God, his mind is enmity in the abſtract, *Rom.* 8. 7. which notes an exceeding exceſſive enmity;

and

there be any familiarity where is this enmity? Moreover, they that do not prepare for Heaven do not mind Heaven, *Rom.*8.5. All their thoughts, projects, designs, delights, do savour of the flesh; Light and Darkness, Fire and Water, Love and Enmity are not more contrary than our dispositions to God: Hence results our misery, to be at odds with our Maker; And can there be any thing more monstrous, than for a creature to oppugn and hate his Creator? And if *Absalom* rise against his father *David*, no wonder he commands him home to his house. But who complains of this rooted enmity to God, which we have cause to bewail in tears of blood. The unholy say to God, *Come not near us, stand by thy self*: And 'tis no wonder if God saith to them; *Depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity.* But God hath ordained all who shall go in with Christ to Heaven, to be holy. *Eph.* 1. 4. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2.

Our effectual Calling, Conformity to the Image of his Son, Justification and Glorification is from God's Purpose and Predestination

ſtination, *Rom.* 8.28, 29, 30. Ho[illegible] the beaten Road and High-way t[illegible] Father's Houſe: ſo that it will not co[illegible] ſiſt with the purpoſe, honour and holineſs of God to admit unholy Men to Heaven.

2. The prepared ſoul is infinitely and eternally belov'd of God, who hath put his Name in the Book of Life. No heart can conceive or tongue expreſs how dear and precious theſe Jewels, *i.e.* holy Men and Women are to the God of Heaven. To every wiſe Virgin it may be ſaid as to *Daniel*, *A Man greatly beloved*, or as the Angel *Gabriel* ſaid to the bleſſed Virgin, *Mary*, *thou haſt found favour with God*, Dan. 10.11. Luke 1. 36. If a man were the Darling of all the Angels, and a Favorite to all the Emperours, Kings and Noble Perſons on the Earth; If all created Beings, *viz.* Heaven, Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars, Fowls, Fiſhes, Beaſts did love him and rejoyce at his welfare. 'Tis nothing to the favour of God, to have a place in his heart: God's Love was *David's* life, *In thy favour is life*, *and thy loving kindneſs is better than life*, Pſal. 63. 3. *Titus Veſpaſian* was ſtiled *Delicia humani generis*, the delight of Mankind: but the Be-

ver is the Delight of God, his *Jedidiah*; *Abraham* was God's Friend and Favourite, St. *Paul*, wrote to all in *Rome*, beloved of God, *Rom.* 1.7. Christian, trace and follow the Crystal stream of Divine Grace (which laid the foundation of thine eternal happiness) and thou shalt find it in the heart of God. But we are like men that look on the River *Nilus*, and gaze wondrously on the streams, remain still ignorant of the Head and Original from whence they issue, *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me*, Isa. 43.4. John 17.23. and if it be a Curse to be unready, as those foolish Virgins, who were therefore shut out, it must needs be infinite mercy to be ready. The Apostle makes it the first-fruits of glory, to be ready: To be prepared unto glory is the glory of mercy. *I know not which* (saith a Divine) *is the greatest love, to prepare for glory, or to bring into the actual possession of it.* For Divine Grace so to Metamorphize and transform a Man as to turn a Lion into a Lamb, *Saul* a bloody Persecutor into a zealous Preacher, a Devil into a Saint, to make of poi-

sonous

ſonous droſs a veſſel of Gold, and then fill it with glory, is love with a witness. *Luke* 8.2. 1 *Cor* 6.10,11. *Auguſtine* made one his ſervant that would have killed him. The great God hath made many ſuch, *Rom.* 5.8. *Col.* 1.21. Man's heart while unregenerated is the worſt part of him, *Jer.* 17.9. For hardneſs 'tis as a ſtone, for darkneſs a dungeon, for filthineſs a dunghill, for abominable wickedneſs and enmity to God an *Epitome* of Hell, ſo that Grace doth precede and prepare for Glory; The ground of all is this, *Thou haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me.*

3. The promiſe of God, who will perform his truth to *Jacob*, and his mercy to *Abraham*, *Mic.* 7. *ult.* The Promiſe hath the ſtrength of God. God hath put all Covenant good for his Servants into Promiſes. The Promiſes are nothing elſe but a Deed of Gift ſealed with the Truth of God; God promiſed to bring his people out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*, and out of *Babylon* to *Jeruſalem*, and he performed it: Heaven is not only a purchaſed poſſeſſion, but a promiſed poſſeſſion. The Promiſes of the Word are either abſolute or conditional, of grace or to grace. To all the Believer is heir by vertue

of this part in Christ, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen: The Promises of the new Covenant do point at the prepared soul, and they secure God and heaven to us. The Gospel promiseth Eternal Life to every one that Believes, *Joh.* 16. 36. God promised to be the Believer's God, to dwell in them, to walk in them, and that he will never, never, never leave them nor forsake them, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Heb.* 13.5. Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord your God hath spoken, said *Joshua* to the people, *Josh.* 23.14. God hath made a promise of a glorious Crown to him that perseveres in grace, *Re.* 2. 10. *Mat.* 24. 13. *Godliness hath the Promise of this life, and that that is to come*; Christians, God that cannot lie, hath promised you heaven, whose Truth and Faithfulness oblige him to the Performance.

The next Ground and Reason is from Christ, why prepared Souls shall go in with him to the Marriage.

1. His relation to them, which is very near. These ready Virgins are Christs Spouse, and must therefore go in with him to the Mar-

Marriage. Christ the holy Head, and Church the holy Bride are one. *Heb.* 2. 11. *John* 17. 23. He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit. 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. They are the Lambs Wife. Christ calls Believers his Sister, his Spouse: And there is none so near by Consanguinity as a Sister, none so near by affinity as a Spouse. The Church is the Kings Daughter, and Married to the Kings Son: That which is between Christ and Believers is Mutual. 1. There is a mutual knowledge and acquaintance, *I know my Sheep, and I am known of mine* Joh. 10. 14. *These have known me*, saith Christ, *John* 17. 25. 2 There is mutual interest and propriety, *Cant.* 2. 16. 3. There is mutual love and affection, the Church is set on Christ's heart and Christ on the Believer's heart. 4. There is mutual converse and intimacy. 5. Mutual resemblance and likeness, they serve as a Glass to see each other. 6. There is mutual sympathy and compassion. They being thus near and dear to each other cannot be long a-part. Christs heart in Heaven is so set upon his Militant Church on Earth, that he doth long for their company to comfort and chear them: and this he will do in a little

time, behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.

2. *Reaſ.* Our ground is from his own Obligation and Perſonal Promiſes, which will be accompliſhed: Chriſt is the faithful and true witneſs, and muſt be as good as his word: he will ſooner deſtroy and annihilate the World, than ſuffer any part of his Word or Promiſe to fail, *Matt.* 5. He told his Diſciples *He went to Heaven to prepare a place for them*, and he hath taken up the poſſeſſion of it in their behalf. This is ſo certain, that Believers are ſaid to ſit togerher in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus: *Epheſ.* 2.6. He hath alſo promiſed to come again and receive them unto himſelf, *John* 14 3. *Where I am* (ſaid our dear and bleſſed Lord) *there ſhall my Servants be.* Every holy man hath heaven and glory in the promiſe of the Goſpell; and that under Chriſts own Hand and Seal. And if with *Peter* ye deſire to know what you ſhall have hereafter to requite all your ſervices, and ſufferings for Chriſt here; He will tell you, *Mat.* 19.26, 27, 28. *And Jeſus ſaid unto them, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regenerati-*

... when the Son of Man shall sit ... Throne of His Glory, ye also shall sit ... Twelve Thrones.

3 *Reas.* Christ's most excellent Mediatory Prayer before his death, doth assure every Christian indeed that he shall be with him. Christ the great Favorite of heaven was always heard. God could never deny any request that ever Christ made. *Father* (said Christ) *I know that thou hearest me always. I know*, (said *Martha* to Christ) *Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*, Joh. 11, 22. Christians, for the joy of your hearts hear what your dear Lord pray'd for all his Elect. *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory.* Now, there was the merit of his Blood and passion went along with this Prayer: *Joh.* 17. 24. *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, said Christ to his Father, *Joh.* 17. 4. Moreover, Jesus the great Advocate with the Father appears and pleads in heaven for the same thing every day, and will, till all the Saints come safe to Glory. *He ever liveth to make Intercession for us. Heb.* 7. 25.

4. *Reas.* The honour and dignity of Christ

calls for this readineſs, who is the Prince of all the Kings of the Earth: the Unregenerated are without God, and none of Chriſts. *His Servants you are whom ye obey*, Rom. 6. 16. Wicked men are the Devils Spouſe, the men of the Earth are the Worlds Spouſe. Juſtitiaries and the ſelf-Righteous are the Laws Spouſe, and it would be a great diſhonor for ſuch to go in with Chriſt. Will any man invite or ſuffer Toads, Serpents, Vipers, or Devils, to come and abide with him, and lodge in his boſom? Is it fit a man that is Leprous, & hath Plague-Sores running on him ſhould come and ſtand in the Preſence of a Prince? The *Leper* under the Law though a King, was to dwell alone, the ſtrange Woman in *Moſes* time was to have her hair cut, and Nails pared before ſhe was to come into the Congregation of Gods people, or be admitted into the Church. Who among the Tents of the Uncircumciſed can think of appearing before this Holy God, and not tremble? It was one of the Articles of high Treaſon brought in againſt Cardinal *Woolſey*, that he had a ſtinking Breath, and durſt come into the Kings Preſence. It will be a diſhonour to Chriſt before Angels

and Men in the Face of the whole [illegible] to own those for his, who have the Devil's mark on them. Sinner, dost thou think to leap into heaven, or come into the Presence of God, whose Eyes are pure, being cloathed with filthy Garments? *Rebeckah* put on her Bracelets and Ornaments, before she came to *Isaac*. Our Lord Jesus would have the Chamber, and the Table furnish'd and made ready, where he and his Disciples met to eat the Passover. Preparation is necessary when we come into the outward Court of Ordinances, much more when we are to enter into the Holy of Holies. *viz.* Heaven it self. *Rehoboam* did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord, 2 *Chro.* 12. 14.

Soul prepare to meet thy God in Glory, if thou hast any respect to his Honour, and thine Eternal Welfare. God your Father, Christians, hath infinite respect to the Dignity of his Son, and so must we. *Severus* never kept in his Court any ill disposed Persons, and will God tolerate them in his Presence; *Alexander* the great inviting *Jonathan* the high Priest to his Wedding, commanded that *Jonathan* should be cloathed in Purple, being to sit next to *Alexander*.

part of a Prince's honour to have bride ready attir'd to welcome and entertain him, when he shall return to her: She owes this honour to him: and he expects it from her: So the Lord Jesus deserves this honour of all his people to be in readiness for him. Suppose these Virgins had turned Harlots, and gone a Whoring from him till his very coming, and then had been taken in, what might the World think, doth he love the company of Harlots? Christian, if thy heart go a Whoring from God after the World and Lusts, it is a disgrace to the Lord Jesus: Whereas 'tis for the honour of this great King at the time of Solemnizing the Marriage, for his Wife to make ready. Rev. 19. 7. *Be ye also ready*, saith Christ.

The third Ground respects the Spirit.

First, The Sanctification of the Spirit.

Secondly, The Habitation of the Spirit.

1. The Sanctification of the Spirit, which hath infused his whole Divine Nature through the holy soul of the Believer; and though a godly man is not sanctified

perfectly, yet he is Regenerate, ſanctified in every part, *viz.* Spirit, Soul, Body, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. 2 *Pet.* 2. 13. Saints are ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, *Rom.* 15. 6. and muſt to Heaven, *Tit.* 3. 5. *Acts* 26. 18.

Secondly, the Habitation of the Spirit. God hath his upper houſe and his lower houſe, the higheſt Heavens and the loweſt hearts: Hear a comfortable word from the Mouth of God, *I will dwell among the Children of* Iſrael, 1 *Kin.* 6. 13. Believers are a habitation of God through the Spirit, *Eph.* 2 *ult.* The heart of an unbeliever is the Devil's-houſe, *Mat.* 12. 44. And he that hath the Purity of a Dove will not take up the Lodging of a Devil. And if the heart of a wicked Man be a little hell, the heart of a holy man is a little Heaven. The Believer hath glory in him, Heaven in him, *The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.* (ſaith Chriſt) *ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.* 1 Cor. 3. 16. *Origen's* father ('tis ſaid) many times uncovered the breaſt of his ſon as he lay aſleep, and kiſſed it, as the Temple wherein the Holy Ghoſt had taken up his Reſidence; Chriſtians, ſtand and wonder

...ercy, and say as *Elizabeth*, whence ...that the Mother of my Lord should ...come to me, or rather my Lord himself? *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.* 1 Cor. 1.26. Under the Law the Lyon and the Eagle were passed by, and the Lamb and the Dove were chosen. That God should come over the heads of Kings and Queens to visit thee! O wonderful Condescention that God should dwell with us (said a serious Person) who have not a hole to put our heads in! Thus it is, God hath taken up his residence in many a little house: The prepared soul may say of the presence of the Living and true God, as one said of his *Idols* (who dwelt in a little Cottage) *The Gods are here with me.* But will God in very deed dwell with men on earth (saith *Solomon*) 2 *Chr.* 6. 18. Yea God by his Word and Spirit doth dwell with men on Earth, 2 *Cor* 6. 16. Where God hath recorded his Name, he hath promised to meet his people, and bless them *Ex.* 20. 24. The Saints who are pure in heart see his out-goings in the Sanctuary. The King is held in his Galleries. *Can.* 7. 5. And they

who meet God and Christ in his lo[illegible] ries of Ordinances, shall ere long me[illegible] in the upper Gallery of glory. *For th[illegible] groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our House, which is from Heaven* 2 Co. 5. 2.

The fourth Ground respects Gods people, together with the Place into which they are to go with Christ. Those that are prepared by grace, have an absolute and unquestionable right to the Kingdom of glory, into which no unclean thing shall ever enter. Believers who are holy in heart and life have a threefold right to Heaven.

First they have a purchased right, and that by the blood of God. The heavenly inheritance of Gods prepared people is bought with a price, so that what the great Surety and Captain of our Salvation hath purchased, Gods People shall actually possess: this is most certain, *Acts* 20. 28. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *Eph.* 1. 14.

Secondly, they have an hereditary right to Heaven, being of the blood royal, and born to the Kingdom, *They are not of the world, as I am not of the world; He that is born in mine house*, said *Abraham, is mine heir*;

every believer is as *Isaac*, a son inherited, an heir of salvation, *Rom.* 1.14. And they have all the right of inheritance. Christians, you are all the Children of God, and heirs, and Joynt-heirs with Christ, *Rom.* 8. 17. This should affect your hearts with infinite delight. The Kingdom wherein *Augustus* the Emperour most delighted was that which he had by inheritance.

Thirdly, they have an aptitudinary right, *viz.* a right by way of fitness, and this is in the text, *Those that were ready went in with him to the Marriage.* The Presence of God and Angels doth not become the unclean: Let mens Pretences and Profession be never so fair, without grace there is no glory: The *Rhodians* and the *Lydians* had a Law, *That those sons which followed not their Fathers in vertue, but lived vitiously, should be disinherited. Without are dogs,* saith St *John*, *Rev.*22.15. The *Irish* Air will not brook a Toad or Serpent to breath in it, much less will Heaven suffer wicked men to live there. Those that will not, cannot please God, are unfit to appear in his Presence. Plants and Trees may associate and converse with beasts, and

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beasts with men, assoon as men [illegible] in Heaven, till they be holy: but [illegible] vers do please and honour God, & [illegible] their business to do his Will, *They have kept thy Word, I am glorified in them*, saith Christ, *John* 17. *And them that honour me will I honour*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. The well-doers must receive the commendation of *Well done*, *They that have done good shall come forth to the Resurrection of life*, John 5. 29. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through Gate into the City.* Rev. 22. 14.

To conclude, all Gods prepared People have now the right of propriety to Heaven, and when they die they shall have right of possession, *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, Luke 23. 43. This is that the Saints on earth breath and pant after, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*, which is best of all.

SECT. V.

1. *Use.* Must none go in with Christ but prepared souls, and are Gods people ready to go?

1. Then

When divine grace in the Saints is wonderfully efficacious. The best of us (like *Joshua* before the Angel) are clothed with polluted garments, and too much unready. Now to adorn and beautifie souls stained and sullied within (in whom there is the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *viz.* an universal defilement) is the highest evidence of the Power and Vertue of the glorious grace of God. When a Mans heart is moulded and fashioned for God, the divine Spirit (like the Sword of the Lord and *Gideon*) doth great things, *He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God,* (saith *Paul,*) 2 Cor. 5.5. *Thine Hands have made me and fashioned me,* (said *David*) *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully & wonderfully made, marvellous are thy Works, I am curiously wrought.* If *David* wondred at the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God in his well-formed comely body, consisting of such various parts and members, how should we stand and wonder at the transforming and renewing mans soul after the Image of God. The Law was written on the two Tables with the Finger of God, and this upon the hidden man of the heart, is also the Lords Work, and

marvellous in our eyes. The [illegible] the Tabernacle and Temple was ra[illegible] curious, but yet not to compare with this [illegible] the Holy Ghoſt; It ſhall be ſaid of *Jacob* and *Iſrael*, what hath God wrought, *We are his Workmanſhip*, Eph. 2. 10. In the great Houſe of God the Church all are not Veſſels of Gold, and prepared for glory. But we may know what Veſſels are for ſpecial uſe, by their metal and curious engraving on them. Sinner, if thine eyes were open, thou mightſt ſee Heaven, God & Glory engraven upon every ſuch veſſel of mercy. Moreover, this ſupernatural grace in the heart is not a dead habit, but a living ſpring, which prompts men to duty, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10.

Secondly, faithful Miniſters (who are Workers together with God, and watch for mens ſouls) muſt vehemently urge the neceſſity of Faith, Repentance and Holineſs, without which none are ready, or can poſſibly be ſaved; There is a ſpiritual Lethargy feiz'd upon the Chriſtian World: *they all ſlumbred and ſlept.* How ſtirring in our Miniſtry muſt we be to awaken men out of this ſtupor and ſecurity, and to fit them for Heaven. The Scripture hath its

ſting,

nd its honey; there is Mount *Ebal* Mount *Gerizim*, the Rod as well as the *Mannah*; the Arrow of Repentance must be levelled at the heart, and we should deliver the whole Counsel of God, *The Word that I shall speak that thou shalt speak*, said the Angel to *Bilaam*, *Numb.* 22. 35. Christ's Embassadors have their Authority and Commission from God and his Word, and therefore they must be plain, particular and piercing in their Preaching, otherwise the blood of never-dying souls will lie at their door: The Word of God like a well-drawn Picture, looks right upon every one: and what we find in Sacred Writ we must preach, please or displease. Is not this written in the New Testament, *that he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned*, Mar. 16. 16. *He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3. last. Men must be turned from darkness to light, from the Power of Satan to God (which is the chief end of Preaching) before they can receive the inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ, *Acts* 26. 18. You must turn or die, repent or perish, be in tears or flames, be holy or never

ver see Gods Face in glory, *Lu*... *Heb.* 12. 14. Happy are they that li... der a Ministry who have will and skill to prepare souls for Heaven. Particular Preaching is penetrating and profitable, 2 *Sam.* 12. 7. *Acts* 2. 36, 37. *General Preaching* (said a worthy Divine) *is deceitful and deluding Preaching. He that Preacheth to every one, preacheth to no one,* (saith a Learned Doctor.) *'Tis like a loaf of bread set before a Company of little Children*, said Mr. *Hildersham. Universalia non operantur.* King *James* said of a Reverend Prelate of this Land, *Methink this man Preacheth of death, as if death were at my back. John* the Baptist, who went before Christ in the spirit and power of *Elias* to make ready a People prepared for the Lord, was called a Crier: and how severe and strict was he in his doctrine and life.

Sinners asleep upon the Mouth of Hell must be awakened, as it were with the voice of thunder. If a Traveller passing through a Town in the dead of the night saw a house burning; Would he whisper out *Fire, Fire?* no, but cry *Fire, Fire, Fire,* with a loud voice. 'Tis the Cry at Mid-

night.

[illegible]at must awake the slumbring Vir-[illegible] and nothing else; *Jonah* must cry in [illegible]e streets of *Nineveh*, and *Jeremy* must cry in the streets of *Jerusalem*. But what must we say or cry to the secure World; Mercy, Pardon, Peace, Salvation, Heaven; No? Fire, Fire, Hell, Hell, Damnation, eternal Wrath and Vengeance, without speedy and hearty repentance to God: this is the Plough and Harrow of the Law, that must go deep and break the fallow ground, and turn up the Turf upon the Sinner's inpenitent obdurate heart. *John* the Baptist, and Jesus began their Ministry with the Doctrine of repentance, *Mat*. 3. 8. 4. 17. Soundness, sincerity, zeal, perspicuity and impartiality in the distribution of the Word, is ordinarily blest of God, to make ready a people prepared for him. So did that holy Man preach who was called the Heaven driver. Our errand and business is the same with *John* the Baptist, to perswade and woo for Christ; and when we have gained Mens consent, and espoused them to Christ, our work is half done. Ministers are Gods Builders, Men must be fitted for the Building: The Stones in the Temple were not rude and unpolish'd

Stones,

Stones, but hewed, squar'd and m
dy; so also were the Utensils of the T
nacle, the Gold, Silver, Brass, and carv
Timber. There are no dead and dirty
stones fit for Gods great House above,
They that were ready went in with him, &c.

Sinner, is thy state hopeful who cannot, will not live a life of holiness; It may be thou hast the face, profession, and form of Godliness, so had the foolish Virgins, so had the pastor and Members of the Church in *Sardis*, *Rev.* 3. 1. There are also many that have not so much as the bark or form of Religion, and hate the life and power of it. Canst thou mock, and scoff at a vertuons pious life, and think thy self undone to part with thy lusts, and give thy heart to God, and yet hope well? If Christ doth not reign in thine heart, and make it holy, thou canst have no hope here, nor Heaven hereafter; *Command* (saith God) *that every Leper be put out of the Camp*, Num. 5. 2. Heaven, that Crown of Righteousness, is called the inheritance of the Saints. The Crown of Heavenly glory will not suit with, or be set on a Lepers head, *Col.* 1. 12. 2. *Tim.* 4. 8.

Thirdly, If none shall go in with Christ but

those which are ready. But a few comparatively of this great World shall be saved and enter into glory. God hath said it, whose Word must stand. 'Tis but one of a City, and two of a Family. *Jer.* 3. 14. There is but a handful ready for heaven, but Millions of men unready. How few of the six hundred thousand that came out of *Egypt* entred into the Promised Land. Look into the broad way to death and hell, and see what Troops and Droves of men and women are there, and how few there be in the narrow way: No wonder you hear the Apostle say, *Though Israel be as the Sand of the Sea, but a Remnant shall be saved.* And who can read, and hear this, and not be astonished? Are there not multitudes, thousands, and ten thousands that have the Image of hell on them, and ready to drop into Eternal Flames, and will you not believe it? Separate the Wheat from the Tares, the Swine from the Sheep, the Precious from the Vile. *Viz.* all prophane persons, all hypocrites, and it will appear. What thoughts of heart, fear and trembling, should this cause in every place, and among all people? When Christ told his Friends the Elect tender-

hearted

hearted Disciples, there was but [illegible] among them, they were all afraid. [illegible] cares, fears, Jealousies should we have about our souls? All that concerns the soul is weighty, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. The evil of the soul is an Eternal evil, and the good of the soul is an Eternal good: Where then is your caution, and solicitude about this soul Affair? If the soul miscarry and is lost, all goes with it, *Mat.* 16. 26. *What will it profit a man to gain the whole World, and to lose his own Soul?* Christian, dost thou not see many set out in the Race, that fall short and lose the Crown? and shall we not serve the Lord with fear? 1 *Cor.* 9. 24 *Ps.* 2. 11. *Heb.* 4. 1. Many shall seek to enter in at the Gate of Glory, and shall not be able, therefore strive, and strive as in an Agony as for thy Life, to pass the strait Gare, *Luke* 13. 24. Many are called, few converted, *The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out* (said Christ) Oh, how sad is this! *Mat.* 8. 12. Be not deceived, the heart is a great deep, very deceitful, a most accurate Impostor; grace is a mystery, the Old Serpent is subtil and very busie, and Pirate-like sets forth his false Colours. and transforms

...ſelf into an Angel of Light. ...fore take thine heart with thee in ...vate; and ſearch and try thy ſtate, and compare thy heart and life by the Word, that thou mayſt find whether thou art ready. *Iſa.* 28. 20. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Gal.* 6. 4.

Fourthly, If thoſe that are ready ſhall go in with Chriſt, then Gods dear Saints ſhould not fear death, but rather deſire it. Thoſe that are fit to dye, need not fear to dye. Death is yours (ſaith *St. Paul* to Believers) which though it diſſolve the union between the ſoul and body, it cannot part God and his people. 'Tis more facil and eaſie to dry up the vaſt Ocean, or to ſeparate Light and heat from the Sun, than to ſeparate Chriſt from his Church. *Rom.* 8. 35. God ſaith, *they are his, my Portion, my Jewels, not one of which ſhall be loſt.* All Gods holy ones ſhall come ſafe to their Fathers Houſe. Their Names are written in heaven, their head and husband is in heaven, *Joh.* 14. 2. And St. *Paul* affirmeth, *that Saints ſit there,* Eph. 2. 6. *The Righteous,* ſaid St. *Peter, are ſcarcely ſaved,* 1 Pet. 4. 18. But truly ſaved Whereas they that are but almoſt ſaved, are never ſaved. A thing done with diffi-

culty

culty is done; it was with diffi
danger the *Iſraelites* got into the L
Canaan; with danger *Paul* and his comp
ny got ſafe to ſhoar, and though they were
in great peril, not one periſhed. A Babe in
Chriſt is built upon a Rock, and a Child in
the Ark had been as ſafe as a Giant. Heaven
and Happineſs is not in our hands, but in
the hands of *One mighty to ſave.* None
can pluck them out of my Father's hands,
underneath are everlaſting Arms. Who
can be too hard for Omnipotency, or fetch
a Believer out of God's Hand? The Cove-
nant of Grace is an everlaſting Covenant,
and ſhall ſtand faſt. Death and the Grave
could not diſſolve the Hypoſtatical Union
of Chriſt, he took his humane Body never
to be ſeparated from it, ſo alſo his myſti-
cal Body. 'Tis true, Death and Doomſday
muſt be very terrible to veſſels of wrath, fit-
ted to deſtruction, God, Chriſt, Scripture,
and Conſcience are againſt them, and all
their Heaven is here, *Luke* 16. *Pſal.* 17. 14.
The Malefactor muſt needs fear the coming
and Face of the Judge: *When* Paul *rea-
ſon'd of Judgment*, Felix *trembled*, and cauſe
enough, *Acts* 24. 26. But *lift up your
Heads and rejoice*, ſaith Chriſt: *Haſte, my*

Be-

haſte, Amen, *So come Lord Jeſus*. When the Bride is attired, and her beautiful Ornaments about her, ſhe expecteth the coming of the Bridegroom, and when he comes, his Reward is with him: The Martyr could ſay, *'Tis well for the preſent*, (who had the Firſt-fruits of Glory) *and it would be better. Your ſorrow* (ſaid Chriſt) to his diſconſolate Diſciples, *ſhall be turned into joy; I will not leave you, I will ſee you again.* Say then, Welcome Death who muſt carry me home: The beloved Wife doth not fear, when abroad, to come to her Husband, nor the dutiful Child to his indulgent Father: Chriſt called his Death *a going to his Father*, who died to bring many Sons to glory. A godly Gentlewoman had made Death ſo familiar to her (by converſing with it, and preparing for it) that ſhe did look upon it as her Father's Servant ſent to fetch her home from School. Death doth the Saints more good than all Ordinances or Afflictions, it brings into fellowſhip with Chriſt quickly, immediately, eternally; the certainty of all Believers coming to Heaven, was typified in the *Iſraelites* paſſing over the Red Sea, not one was drowned, neither was one *Egyptian* ſaved.

saved. To note, that all wicked men [illegible] damned. The men of the world have a [illegible] Heaven, and all in hand; but the Christians best is yet behind. In this strange Land Gods People are not known, being as Princes out of their own Countrey; *But when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall be like him, and see him as he is*, 1 Joh. 3.

Fifthly, it greatly concerns all while they have time and means, to make ready for Eternity. Two things argue an excellent spirit and great wisdom.

1. To see evils afar off.
2. To see time and opportunity when it is near.

First, to see evils afar off, especially soul-evils, an eternal loss; *A prudent Man seeth the evil, and hideth himself.* Secure sinner look forwards, and see what is before thee, or over thine head, *viz.* a cloud bigger then a mans hand, yea, a storm in the clouds which *Noah* saw a hundred and twenty years before it came. The threatning Word, like lightning, hath flasht in thine eyes, expect a Crack and Thunderbolt of divine wrath shortly to follow.

The

Lord will come with Fire, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of Fire. *The day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble*, Isa. 66. 15. Mal. 4. 1. *The Coming of the Lord draweth near*, Jam. 5. 8. *Behold the Judge standeth before the door*; the year of vengeance and day of recompence is at hand; *He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in righteousness*, Acts 17. 31. *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 37. *The day of the Lord so cometh as a Thief in the night, and when they shall say Peace and Safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape*, 1 Thes. 5. 13.

Secondly, To see time, and opportunity when it is near, for every thing is beautiful in its Season: God hath joyned Time and Duty together, so must we. Hear what advice wise *Solomon* giveth us for our future welfare, Eccl. 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor Device, nor Wisedome, nor Knowledge, in the Grave whither thou goest*. When thy breath is gone, nothing can be done, what we leave undone here,

will

will be undone for ever: There is no coming back into the World to act another part, to live a second life, to mend our work: For as the tree falleth so it lieth; after death there is no means, no Ministry, no mercy, no duty: It will then be impossible to repent, the date of Gods long suffering will be out, and the day of grace over, and no patience, no pity, no pardon on Gods part. There is no heaven to be found in hell, nor one drop of water to cool the tongue. Then fear, and seek the Lord, and secure your souls while he may be found. *Isa.* 55. 6. Go now to the Fountain of divine grace, and fill and furnish your hearts with oyl, or it will be too late to buy in a little time. Tis sad and doleful to think how poor sinners will cry out for oyl and grace, pity and pardon when it is too late, *Give us of your Oyl, for our Lamps are gone out*, (said the fooliſh Virgins,) Is it nothing, Sinner, to slight an offered Saviour, will it not be bitterness in the latter end? *This is the condemnation, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation*, Heb. 2. 3. Now or Never; the Holy God saith *To day*, and Christ saith, *He is at the door*, Rev. 3. 20. Will you

open

him, or keep the door of your hearts ... What, shut out, and put off a Christ, a Christ, who is worth infinite worlds? God forbid. Say in the words of the Psalmist, *Be ye lifted up ye everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in*, Ps. 24. 7, 9. Sinner, remember this, If thou dost bar and bolt thy door against Christ now, there will be two other doors shut in a little time.

1. The door of Heaven, the gate of Mercy and Glory, to keep all out that are out.

2. The gate of Hell will be shut to keep all in that are in. When *Noah*, that righteous man was shut up in the Ark, there was no Entrance for any more, all without were left to the Deluge, and lost. It's dreadful to the Malefactor, when the Jaylor turns the Key upon him, and leaves him in his Bolts and close Prison. If it went so near *Moses*'s heart to be shut out of *Canaan*, how wilt thou bear the shutting out of Heaven? There was a doleful outcry, when the Earth closed her mouth, and *Corah* and his company went down. O what a hideous Shriek and Cry will men make, when the mouth of Hell shall be shut upon Sinners for ever, for ever.

Sixthly, Believers ſhould highly eſteem and heartily love one another, being to go in together. Chriſtians, Love is of God, and Chriſt's new Commandment; And let me tell you, Saints have the greateſt Obligation to love.

Firſt, You are everlaſtingly and equally beloved of one God and Father, and are given to one dear Redeemer, to whom your hearts are joined as your Head and Huſband. You are renewed and ſanctified by one moſt Holy Spirit, whoſe mark is ſet upon you all. You are going to *Jeruſalem* that is above, towards which your Faces are, being Fellow-Citizens with the Saints and Houſhold of God. And when your Warfare and Peregrination is ended, you ſhall go in with Chriſt, and meet in an everlaſting Habitation. Brethren and Beloved, Will you not love them, whom not only the great and good God, but great and good men have loved. *The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*; and ſuch were *David*'s excellent ones, and his companions, *Pſal.* 16. 3. *Pſal.* 119. 63. 'Tis a Character of a Citizen of *Zion* to contemn a vile Per-

, but he honoureth them that fear Lord, *Pſal.* 15. 4. *And by this we know,* ſaith the beloved Diſciple, *that we are paſſed from death to life.* 'Tis ſtoried of an ancient King who made a Feaſt, and invited a company of poor Chriſtians, and he bade his Nobles alſo: Now when the Nobles came, he ſet them in his Hall; when the Chriſtians came, he had them up into his Preſence-chamber: One ask'd him the Reaſon; he anſwer'd, *I do not this as I am their King here, for I reſpect you more than them: But as I am King of another World, I muſt needs honour them, becauſe God doth moſt honour them, and they be Kings and Princes with me.* Moreover, 'tis ſaid, that *Conſtantine* the Great kept many godly Miniſters about him, and though they were but meanly habited, he not conſidering their outſide, but honouring the Image of God in them, ſet them at his Table, and took them with him whitherſoever he went. *Maud* the Wife to *Henry* I. King of *England*, to ſhew her Piety, did waſh, dreſs, wipe and kiſs the Ulcers, Sores, and Feet of poor People; which her Brother ſeeing and diſliking, ſaid, *If the King your Husband knew this, you ſhould never kiſs his Lips.* She replied, *The Feet of*

the King of Heaven are to be preferred before the Lips of a King on Earth. Mr. *John Fox* that wrote our *Book of Martyrs*, being asked, (upon his Return into *England* after the death of Queen *Mary*) *Whether he did remember such poor Christians of his former Acquaintance?* Answered, *I forget Lords and Ladies to remember them.*

Seventhly, See the Reason why God's People (being in the pursuit of Christ and Heaven) are and must be very serious, diligent and constant in holy Performances. *David*'s Soul longed for God's Courts, to see his Power and his Glory in his Sanctuary, *Ps.* 63. 2. Christian, Art resolved to secure thy Soul, and make sure for Heaven, go to the Ordinance of God, as Christ's Mother went into the Temple to find her Son. Divine Ordinances are the ways and walks of the Lord in which the Spirit works; the Bed wherein Christ and the Spouse meet and solace themselves. Here the North and South-wind blow upon Christ's Garden, and cause the Spices to flow forth. The Honey-dews and showers of Blessings under the Spouts of the Sanctuary, make their Souls, like *Gideon*'s Fleece, moist, when others are dry

dead. Holy *David* had cauſe to ſay, *I love the Habitation of thine Houſe, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth*; and he deſired not only ſometimes to go into God's houſe, but to ſtay there for ever, *Pſal.* 26. 8. 27. 4. What a comforting, encouraging, and comely ſight is it to ſee men going to Heaven, reſort to the Word and pure worſhip of God, as Doves to their windows, *Pſ.* 122. 1. Chriſtians, When and where ſhould holy Men meet, but under the Ordinances of Heaven, and that upon holy Sabbaths, to hear awaking Sermons, and to receive ſealing Sacraments? Shall wicked men, who ſerve the Devil, and are likely to periſh for ever, meet in Taverns, Alehouſes, Harlots houſes, and at other Fleſh-pleaſing Recreations, and will not you meet at the Poſts of Wiſdom's door? Here are the green and freſh Paſtures in which the Souls of the Righteous flouriſh. And what makes ſo many declining Chriſtians, (who are afraid to die, becauſe unfit to die) but the loſs of ſuch ſweet opportunities for their Souls. Now to quicken all to daily diligence, in the fear of God, conſider theſe things.

1. You that are moſt remiſs and [illegible] would be as well thought of, as the [illegible] laborious, lively, watchful, thriving Chriſtian, to whom the Word preached is as ſweet as Honey, and preferr'd above their appointed food. There are who can willingly part with a Meals-meat to hear a Sermon for their Souls.

2. You would gladly reap their Sick-bed Comforts, Joys, Refreſhments, when dying and going into the everlaſting world. How many careleſs Chriſtians, with *Ephraim*, will tread out the Corn, but will not break the clods, *i. e.* take pains for their Souls.

3. You will be willing to go into Heaven with them. There were that would have gone into the Ark with *Noah*, who had no mind to build an Ark to ſave them. To cloſe this, I ſhall add two things.

1. To live in the Neglect of commanded Duties, and in the Practice of known Sins, will be a ſting and ſtab to thy Soul.

2. To be ſlight, formal and heartleſs in Duties will ſtarve thy Soul. Chriſtian, this will not make for thy comfortable account, or prepare thee to go into Heaven with Chriſt.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Second Uſe of Caution or Dehortation; Muſt none go in with Chriſt, but thoſe that are inherently prepared and fitted?

1. Take heed of leaning upon, and truſting too much to Lamps, Duties, Parts, common Grace, Baptiſmal Regeneration, Morality, Self-Righteouſneſs, Legal Terror, Servile Fear, or any thing that may leave you ſhort of Chriſt and Heaven: Think upon *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, and the *Iſraelites* that came to the borders of *Canaan*, and were ſhut out of that good Land. How many have fallen from the Pinacle of the Temple, into the Place of Torment: And if ſome go to Heaven by the Gates of Hell, others go to Hell by the Gates of Heaven. Self-Ignorance, carnal Confidence, Preſumption, and a falſe Peace, have cauſed Thouſands to periſh. The peace and calm in many a Mans conſcience, is the Devil's peace, *Luke* 11. 21. It's ſad to ſee Men go ſinging to Hell; whereas true Peace is grounded upon the Covenant of Grace, the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, Union and Communion with Chriſt, Likeneſs

and conformity to Christ, and the [illegible] of the Spirit, *Isa.* 54. 10. *Rom.* 8. 6. [illegible] 12. 14.

2. Tremble at the thoughts of being a Sinner in *Zion*. Take heed of Hypocrisie in the Profession of Religion. An Hypocrite is a wicked man under a disguise, or in a godly man's habit; but the Vizard and Paint on mens Faces will fall off when they shall stand before God, who searches the heart.

3. Do not judge of mens preparedness for Heaven by their agreement with us in Opinion, or by their mild and good Natures, *&c.* We are very apt to judge of mens Habits and Graces, by their natural tempers, and hereby we run upon a mistake. A dram of Evangelical Sincerity would have made the young man in the Gospel seem a great Saint. A little grace makes a great shew in some tempers, and a great deal scarce appears in others. A little Sugar serves for sweet Wine, but there is more required to sweeten that which is more sharp.

4. Let young Converts not meddle too much with hard and difficult things in Religion. Opinions, and knotty Controversies

will ſoon engroſs the heart, and puzzle the head, and waſte much time, and hurt your Souls. Read the Word, ſtudy well your Catechiſms, and be well acquainted with the Subſtantials and Fundamentals of Religion, which are eſſential to the being and well-being of your Souls in grace. Conſult with your faithful Paſtors, take heed of Impoſtors, and be earneſt with God in Prayer for the ſpirit of a ſound mind.

5. You that are ſincere, muſt yield to no baſe Doubts, Fears and Objections of Satan, and your own hearts. Deny not the grace of God in you, which is a great diſhonour to God, and to the Spirit of God. Hath God taken thee out of the Herd of Sinners, and converted thine heart, and written thy Name in Heaven, and wilt thou attempt to raze it out, and write thy Name upon the doors of Hell? Chriſtian, Do not hearken to the Father of Lyes, who works upon thy dark and melancholy humor, to rob thy Soul of comfort.

6. Let all take heed of neglecting frequent trial of your ſelves and ſtate, leſt your hearts and the old Serpent be too hard for you. If thou would'ſt not be deceived about thy Soul and Heaven, and

undone for ever, reflect and cast th[illegible] upon thy self. Let thine eyes be as the [illegible] of the Cherubims, inward. A timely, diligent, and plain hearted examination of a Man's self, is a most weighty and important duty. If the Merchant or Shopkeeper doth not take an account of his Wares, and cast up his Books, how can he judge of his Estate? How can we understand how matters go between God and us, if we never look within? This leads the way to the next thing in order.

SECT. VII.

The third *Use*. By way of Enquiry, *They that were ready, went in with him to the Marriage*. Enquire, Is all well within me? Have I the White Stone, and New Name? *viz.* The things that accompany salvation. Some are curious in dissecting of Bodies to understand the Anatomy, *viz.* The inward parts and contexture of it: But see that thou art skilful in the Soul's Anatomy. Dive into the secrets of thy Soul, and Closet of thine heart, and be critical in this disquisition. Self-Examination is a serious and busie work of the Soul, whereby it takes a true

...de prospect and estimate of its spiri-tual estate. But how few are well read in the Book of their own hearts? The foolish Virgins, had they searched their Vessels, might have found the want of Oil. Soul, art ready, or not ready? This is a great question, and hardly to be resolved. 'Tis much like that of Christ to the man that came to the Feast without a wedding Garment: When Christ asked him, *How came he thither?* he was speechless. Sirs, If the thing here enquired after, were about secular and worldly Affairs, I might expect a ready Answer. Ask the skilful *Husbandman* whether the Corn and Grass be ripe and ready for the Scythe or Sickle? he will soon answer. Ask the Heir whether he be ready for the Inheritance? and he will tell you. Ask the Student, whether he be ready to ascend the Pulpit? or the Apprentice, when his time is out, whether he is ready to set up for himself? And ask young Men and Maids that are grown to their ripe and flourishing Age, whether they are ready for Marriage? and they can answer, We are ready. But are you fit for Christ, and prepared for Death and Judgment? Who can or dare say, ready, ready, Lord. There are

who

who pleaſe themſelves to think or ſay, I have ſo many Bags ready for a Mortgage, Purchace, ſuch Portions, ſo many Hundreds, ſuch Lands, Livings, Farms or Mannors ready for their Children; and it may be their Souls are ſo far from being prepared for Chriſt and Heaven, that they are ready for the Devil and Damnation. Remember here only, that they which were ready, were received in, and the Door was ſhut. Five did lie ſo long aſleep, that did little think they were unready, till the Bridegroom came, and it was too late. There are who deceive themſelves with a golden flattering dream of glory, and are ready to drop down into eternal flames. Whereas many tender-hearted gracious Souls that are ready, fear to ſtep in at the Paſſage, or over the narrow Bridge, between life and death, the end of time, and the beginning of Eternity. O how accurate, curious and ſerious ſhould all be, in enquiring about ſigns and marks of readineſs for Chriſt. Now before I come to the Solution of the Queſtion, I muſt let you know (by the way) whom I intend not in this uſe of Trial.

1. I intend no ignorant or impious Perſon.

2. No

No Heretick or wretched Apoſtate, who is departed from the faith, and form of found words, and denieth the Lord that bought him.

3. No Hypocrite, or waſhed Swine, whoſe Conſcience and the Word of Truth will tell him, his heart is not right in the ſight of God. Theſe may have Evidences for Hell, they have none for Heaven. And that every man may prove his own works, here are added marks of Readineſs for Chriſt and Heaven.

Firſt, When a Believer by Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience, hath made his Calling, Election, and Love of Chriſt ſure to him, he is ready for the Marriage, and to enjoy Eternal Fellowſhip with Chriſt in Heaven. Chriſtian, If thou art Chriſt's Garden, or a true Branch in the true Vine, thou canſt not miſs of glory. It was not hanging on the outſide of the Ark did ſave, but being in the Ark. So when a poor Chriſtian hath good hope that he is one of the Sinners Chriſt came to ſave, and can ſay as St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 20. Chriſt loved me, and gave himſelf for me. I know in whom I have believed, he is ready, I ſhall

but

but change my place, I ſhall not cha[illegible] company, ſaid one dying. I know I belie[illegible] as I know I live, ſaid an eminent Miniſter. 'Tis no more for me to die, (ſaid another) than to cloſe my Eyes. I ſee all Heaven; O what a bleſſed ſight is the Face of God, ſaid a famous Miniſter, when going out of the world. I ſee Heaven-gate ſtand wide open, ſaid a Chriſtian when departing this life. When Mr. *Bolton* came to die, and ſome of his Pariſh being at his Bed-ſide, deſir'd him to expreſs what he felt in his Soul of the comforts of Chriſt; he anſwered, *I am, by the wonderful mercy of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold; I feel nothing in my Soul but Chriſt, with whom I heartily deſire to be.* When a Believer hath taſted the ſweetneſs of the pardon of Sin, and inward Peace, his Conſcience being calm and quiet, he is ready for a dying hour, and to ſtep into Heaven. He may ſay, *Now let thy Servant depart in Peace: for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation. Haſte, my Beloved, make no tarrying O my God; I deſire to be diſſolv'd, and to be with Chriſt*; which is far, far the better, *Phil.* 1.

Secondly, When the King of Glory doth bring in his rich Ornaments and Hangings, and

...tifies the Soul, and dwells in it, the ... is ready to go in with Christ. Our own righteousness is a filthy garment that must be cast off. Whereas when the King's Daughter and Spouse of Christ is made lovely by the change of Raiment, or Wedding Garment, the glorious Robe of Christ, pure, perfect, personal righteousness, she is ready. We are compleat in him, yea, all fair, and without spot. Though Christ finds his Church speckled, sullied and polluted, he doth not leave her so. *I put a beautiful Crown upon thy head, and thou wert perfect through my comeliness*, Ezek. 16. 8, 13, 14. *Eph.* 5. 25, 26. This Righteousness of God doth reconcile and pacifie God. 'Tis said, that *Pilate* wearing Christ's Coat without a Seam, pacified the wrath of angry *Cæsar*. Christian, If by the hand of Faith thou hast put on Christ, thou art as a Queen prepared for the presence of the King of Glory. Whereas without this Righteousness, there is nothing but shameful nakedness in the best, so that you will be ready to cry out, as the *Israelites* to *Moses*, (when God appeared upon Mount *Sinai*) *Let not the Lord come near us, lest we die*: Or you will (with *Adam*) rather seek to hide your selves from God,

God, than appear before him. Now look in and examine thy ſtate; the time was, thou wert without God and Chriſt in the world, and couldſt commit evil with both hands earneſtly; the time was, when thy Conſcience was ſear'd, and Sin was no burden or ſhame to thee, though thou didſt lick up this vomit, and wallow in the mire, and livedſt in it as thy trade; but now God hath broken thy Conſcience, and brought thee under a ſenſe and ſentence of death, and made thee poor in ſpirit, and to lie down aſhamed and confounded, becauſe of all thy ſins before him: And the Lord hath endeared Chriſt to thee, and cauſed thee to ſee a glorious riſing Sun in his Righteouſneſs, which the Goſpel hath brought to light: though thou wert the greateſt Sinner, a poor, naked, condemned, vile, curſed creature; thou haſt that which renders thee like an Angel in the pure eyes of God, and which will quiet thy Conſcience, and anſwer to all the demands of Law and Juſtice; therefore be not diſcouraged to die and ſtand before God, if he ſhould ſend for thee this day or night; thou haſt a Chriſt to carry with thee, and the Angels will bid All welcome to the Quire of heavenly glory,

that

Thirdly, When the Bias, Inclination, and Stream of the heart, that was wont to run downward toward Sin, and the World, doth now run upwards towards Christ and Heaven, the Believer is actually ready. If there be a supreme and conquering affection in thy Soul to Christ, and there is none above him in thine heart, so that thou canst not, wilt not be quiet, or satisfied without him, thou art fit to go in with him. The Soul of the Believer doth follow so hard after God, that ye may as soon nourish and satiate a lively Child with dry Breasts, and a craving appetite with air and words, as a Christian without a Christ. Canst say as the Church in her pathetical Suit. *Cant* 8.6,7. *Set me as a Seal upon thine heart.* No place but the heart of a Saviour, for a panting Soul. 'Tis as if she had said, carry me in thy mind, in thy eyes, and in thine hands, as a Jewel on the breast, as a Ring on the finger; let me be near thine heart, and carried up and down in thy heart for ever. The Churches love to Christ was so vehement and strong, and of that conquering nature, that she could no more resist it, or stand before it, than death, fire, or the grave could

could be reſiſted. Sinner, Is Chriſt ſo up in thy eſteem, as to attract and draw thy Soul after him. Moreover, when Chriſt comes in, the world muſt give place and go out. Is thine heart in a great meaſure dead to the world? Doth it appear to be (as one calleth it, a great nothing) duſt and ſhadows. 'Tis ſaid of the *Iſraelites*, Acts 7. 39. *Their hearts turned back again into* Egypt; *They carried* Egypt *into the Wilderneſs with them.* 'Tis ſaid of Queen *Mary*, If ſhe had been ript up after her death, *Calice* might have been found in her heart. *Lot's* Wife was commanded to make haſte out of *Sodom*, but ſhe left her heart behind. But how is it with thee? Art thou riſen with Chriſt? And is the world crucified to thee, and thine heart above it? Doſt look upon the world, as the *Jews* on *Babylon*, as a ſtrange Land? Canſt ſay as *David*, 1 Chron. 29. 15. *We are ſtrangers before thee. I am a ſtranger in the earth*, Pſal. 119. When the things of the world draw our affections ſtrongly after them, Chriſt and Heaven cannot be ſo precious and deſirable, but Believers know the things of the world are not worthy of their love. They are common to good and bad, they are uncertain, they cannot

ve nor ſatisfie, they cannot keep us om ſickneſs, nor from death, nor ſave our Souls from Hell. They are no carriage for another world. *I am going to the place* (ſaid the Martyr) *where money is no current coin.* 'Tis ſaid of God's Worthies, *They did ſeek a better Countrey, that is an heavenly*; and confeſſed, *They were ſtrangers and pilgrims in the earth*, Hebr. 11. 13, 14. Now if your Treaſure be in Heaven, your Affections in Heaven, and your Converſations heavenly, you may be aſſured of being there in a little time. Again, Doſt conflict with Sin, and get ſome conqueſt over it day by day? Is thy Soul eſtranged from all kinds of Sin? Sinner, Canſt thou be fit to go in with Chriſt, and hide and harbor his Enemies, and hold a truce with ſome ſecret Sins?

The Uſe is for *Enquiry*, Therefore ask thy ſelf theſe Queries: Doſt thou ſpare no *Agag*, a ruling Sin? Withdraw no wedge of Gold, or *Babyloniſh* Garment, a gainful Sin? Doſt make a League with no *Gibeonite*? Canſt, with *Joſhua*, deſtroy every *Canaanite*, even that Sin which for ſweetneſs thou rolleſt under thy tongue, the ſtumbling block of thine own iniquity, the *Peccatum in deliciis*? Doſt batter the Tower of *Jericho*?

Canſt

Canſt break down the bulwark of the [illegible] and ſay of every ſin, as the *Jews* of Chriſt, *Away with him, let him be Crucified*; thou art a prepared Soul. When Chriſt that glorious Sun is riſen and enthron'd in the heart, that a man can ſay, Come and ſee the place where the Lord reigns; he is ready for Heaven.

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4. When the Believer hath ſo increaſed his Talent, that the Grain of Muſtard-ſeed is become a great Tree, (*viz.*) He hath gotten ſuch a ſtock of Grace, that he can ſay, as the Rich man of his Ground, *I have much laid up*, he is ready. Three things Saints do ardently deſire in order to this fitneſs.

1. Grace in the Reality of it.

2. Grace in the Fulneſs of it.

3. The gracious Preſence, *Let my Beloved come into his Garden*, ſaid the Church.

Chriſtians, you muſt not only have Grace habitually, but actually, in its moſt lively and vigorous exerciſe, to prepare you for Heaven. Grace is a Talent ſent down from Heaven, and put into our hands to trade with. When the Oil is in the Veſſel, and the Lamps burn bright, *i. e.* Divine Grace ſhines in the Soul, like Stars in the Night,

the

Christian is in a fit posture to meet Christ. Christians, Why should you take up your Stand in Religion, and not go on to Perfection: Even as *Appelles* upon all his Pictures would write, *Faciebat, non facit.* You must not suffer your Lamps to wax dim, and your Oil to waste. A Dwarf is a Monster in Nature. As there are some decayed in their Trades and Estates, and others grown poor and consumptive in their Bodies, so are there withered and decayed Professors in every Society, the New Man is very weak and feeble in very many. What are become of the graces, comforts, and delights of the Spirit? This stream doth not run, Rivers of living water do not flow out of our Bellies: Where is the old stock, and the new increase? That plenty and fulness of the Spirit, that must ripen our Souls, and make us ready? If Grace, like the House of *David*, did revive, and wax stronger and stronger in you, it would cure your Stupor and Security, and give you (bear with the expression) a fresh Start, or new Alarm for Heaven. That grace is not in the gaining hand, is most apparent by your letting down your Watch, and falling asleep. By your Listlesness to Duties, and want of life

life and affection in them; by the prev[illegible]cy of corruption, and decay of godly sorrow for sin and inward peace; by the blotting of your Evidences for Heaven, and want of Communion with Christ, who stands aloof off from the withered and decayed Christian. Friend, Dost thou not hear the Lord say, I have something against thee, because thou hast lost thy first Love? We read of the first days of *David*, and of the first ripe Fruits; the first Fruits of the Spirit, the love of the Espousals: But where shall we find it? What is become of the sweet Incense of Prayer and Praise thou wert wont to send up to Heaven? The time was, thou couldst be early and late with God by solemn and secret Prayer, and direct, and dart up thy Soul to Heaven often in a day, by occasional ejaculatory Prayers: Is not this golden Lamp gone out? Was there never a Spirit of Prayer among God's People in this Nation? What is become of that inward affection in Prayer? Where shall we find it? Is all our Religion resolv'd into Forms and Formality? How little spiritual Worship hath God by the best of us, who will accept of no other Worship? Where are those frequent Visits from Christ in his Ordi-

nces you have found? Where are choice Fruits in Christ's Garden? You that are planted in the House of the Lord, must flourish in the Courts of our God, and cast forth your Roots like *Lebanon*, *Grow in grace, and you shall come into glory*, 2 Pet. 1. 11.

Question.

Do all God's People (who shall go in with Christ) die in a comfortable condition, and with Moses *see the Promised Land: Or have they a Prospect of their heavenly Countrey?*

Answ. No: Scripture and Experience prove the contrary. And here I shall lay down some Particulars, both to quicken and support God's People, whose Souls seem to be at the very point of despair.

First, The state of a godly man, and his future Felicity, is not to be adjudged by the manner of his death, or his sensible comforts at the end of his days, but by the general course and tendency of his life. A Ship that comes home richly laden, may meet with a storm at the Harbor's mouth. *It matters not much* (said Dr. *Harris* to his holy disconsolate wife) *whether comfort comes an hour*

hour before death, or an hour after death, a godly Man may die mourning; God will give him the garment of gladneſs in Heaven, for his ſpirit of heavineſs in Earth. A holy Miniſter of this Nation was wont to ſay, *He never taſted the ſweet of Religion all his Life*, meaning Aſſurance of Heaven.

Secondly, Believing doth precede Sealing; the direct act of Faith goes before the reflect act of Faith; the Faith of Adherence, before the Faith of Evidence, *Eph.* 1. 13.

Thirdly, The Kingdom of Glory is not promiſed to Aſſurance, but to Faith and Repentance. There are many now in Heaven, that were not aſſured of it till they came thither. And how many tender ſerious Souls are there who prize none in the world like a Chriſt, who love him with all the regards of the Lord, who hate the Enemies of his Scepter with a perfect hatred, who would not willingly offend or grieve him in the leaſt meaſure, who cleave unto him as the only Rock of Salvation, who would not relinquiſh their intereſt in him for millions of worlds. And yet they weep with *Mary*, becauſe they cannot ſee their Lord. They conflict with fears and doubts

day

night, and have not that reflexive ...dence and assurance that he is their Christ, their God. *The hour* (said one) *in which Assurance comes is seldom, and its stay is short.* Those that have it, have it not at all times; as there are degrees of Grace, so there are different measures of Assurance. The Jewels of Grace may lie hid in the close and dark Cabinet of the heart, until the Spirit shine upon its own Grace. The choicest Flowers have their roots out of sight. There are who be as truly in the favour of God as the Angels themselves, but they are very doubtful of it. 'Tis reported that two Ministers came to visit a godly Woman who was weeping over her Child in the Cradle, and being asked by one of the Ministers the cause of her grief, she said, *Because I have profest Religion more than Twenty years, and am not assured of my Salvation.* One of the Ministers asked the Woman, *Whose Child is this in the Cradle?* she answered, *Mine: But*, said he, *Doth the Child know you are the Mother of it?* she replied, *No:* which Question was a consolation to this dejected sad Woman. *The Lord knoweth those that are his.*

Fourthly, A man may come safe to Hea-

hour before death, or an hour after death a godly Man may die mourning; God may give him the garment of gladneſs in Heaven, for his ſpirit of heavineſs in Earth. A holy Miniſter of this Nation was wont to ſay, *He never taſted the ſweet of Religion all his Life*, meaning Aſſurance of Heaven.

Secondly, Believing doth precede Sealing; the direct act of Faith goes before the reflect act of Faith; the Faith of Adherence, before the Faith of Evidence, *Eph.* 1. 13.

Thirdly, The Kingdom of Glory is not promiſed to Aſſurance, but to Faith and Repentance. There are many now in Heaven, that were not aſſured of it till they came thither. And how many tender ſerious Souls are there who prize none in the world like a Chriſt, who love him with all the regards of the Lord, who hate the Enemies of his Scepter with a perfect hatred, who would not willingly offend or grieve him in the leaſt meaſure, who cleave unto him as the only Rock of Salvation, who would not relinquiſh their intereſt in him for millions of worlds. And yet they weep with *Mary*, becauſe they cannot ſee their Lord. They conflict with fears and doubts day

nd night, and have not that reflexive vidence and assurance that he is their Christ, their God. *The hour* (said one) *in which Assurance comes is seldom, and its stay is short.* Those that have it, have it not at all times; as there are degrees of Grace, so there are different measures of Assurance. The Jewels of Grace may lie hid in the close and dark Cabinet of the heart, until the Spirit shine upon its own Grace. The choicest Flowers have their roots out of sight. There are who be as truly in the favour of God as the Angels themselves, but they are very doubtful of it. 'Tis reported that two Ministers came to visit a godly Woman who was weeping over her Child in the Cradle, and being asked by one of the Ministers the cause of her grief, she said, *Because I have profest Religion more than Twenty years, and am not assured of my Salvation.* One of the Ministers asked the Woman, *Whose Child is this in the Cradle?* she answered, *Mine: But*, said he, *Doth the Child know you are the Mother of it?* she replied, *No:* which Question was a consolation to this dejected sad Woman. *The Lord knoweth those that are his.*

Fourthly, A man may come safe to Hea-

ven without Assurance, but not [illegible] Grace and inherent Holiness. But remember this, the more careless and indifferent a Man or Woman is about the assurance of Heaven, the further off he is from it; therefore prize it highly, press after it vehemently, if thou wouldst attain it.

Fifthly, Great castings down, and Soul distresses, do often usher in much joy and inward peace, as a dark misty Night goes before a bright Morning, and a cold long Winter before a fruitful Spring. Some that have been brought down to the Valley of the shadow of Death, have also been carried up to the Mount of Transfiguration. The Spirit of Bondage doth lead the way to the Spirit of Adoption, *Rom.* 8. A Christian that is poor and contrite in his own sense, may have his Soul in a prosperous condition. And 'tis a great Faith to cleave to Christ and the Promises, when a man hath little comfort. *The time may come* (saith a great Divine) *when the Faith of Adherence may be all in all.* Though thy Soul is cast down, Assurance may be at the door. When *Mary Magdalen* was weeping, and thought her Lord was risen and gone, Christ was behind her, *John* 20.

Sixthly,

thly, Saints do not uſually die in a ſwoon or ſpiritual Conſumption. If *Eutychus* fall down dead, he muſt riſe up again: So God will one way or other recover his declining People, and revive his work in them, and make them ready. Conſider, it greatly concerns all that will live and die comfortably, and enjoy Chriſt and Heaven eternally, to preſs after Certainty, and to make ready. Are all our deſirable and beſt things in the world uncertain, and ſhall our Souls and Heaven be ſo too? In things of infinite leſs value, men are for Certainty, and why not in this? The Uſurer would have money told twice, who was wont to ſay to his man, *It is good to be ſure.* In caſe of money lent, men will have double ſecurity, by Bond and Land. In *London* there is an Enſuring Office for Merchandize: And will you have no care to preſerve your Souls? If certainty of Salvation were to be bought, *God knows, If I had ten Earths,* (ſaid a very Holy and Learned Divine) *I would part with them for it.*

SECT. VIII.

The 4th *Uſe* is, To perſwade all who have any regard to God, and their dear

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SECT. VIII.

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Souls, to be in readineſs. Awake, ſleep, and get your Garments on, Oil in Veſſel, Loins girt, your Lamps burning, that you may be ready, and the Lord find you ſo, as well as men think you ſo.

This plain *Uſe* of *Exhortation* is directed to two ſorts of Perſons.

1. Thoſe who are wholly unready for Death and Judgment.

2. To thoſe who are in part ready, but not ſo ready as they ſhould be, who muſt ſtand before the Lord: And as they themſelves another day will wiſh they had been.

1. Thoſe who are wholly unready to go in with Chriſt.

Queſt. Are there any ſuch? yea, more than a few. How many hear, and now read theſe Sermons, do know themſelves unready, and will not prepare; whoſe Conſciences tell them if they ſhould die, and ſtand before God in their preſent condition, they are undone for ever. If they ſhould receive a Summons to come to God's Bar this day or this night, we might hear them cry out, Spare me a little longer. Lord, ſpare me the Prince, and me the Prieſt. Spare me the Father, and me the Son. Spare me the Mother, and me the Daughter. Spare me

Man, and me the poor Man. Spare the Master, and me the Servant. Spare me the young Man, and me the old Man. Spare me the Mistress, and me the Maid. Spare me the Learned, and me the Unlearned Man. Me the sickly Man, and me the healthy Man; Lord, for one Month, or Year more, before I go to the place from whence I shall never return.

To open and illustrate, *viz.* That there are abundance unready. Let me ask you, What think you of the Infidel world, the uncircumcised in heart and flesh? How many Kingdoms and Nations are there, who know not the way to a Life of Immortality by a Mediator? These are the Devil's Freehold, without hope, and stumble down to Hell in the dark. But to leave the poor *Pagans*, (who perish for want of vision,) and to come nearer to our selves: What vast multitudes are there in the Christian world, and that among baptized Persons, who enjoy the means of salvation, and are altogether unready for Christ and Heaven.

To descend to Particulars.

1. Those that are grosly ignorant of

God and Jeſus Chriſt, *viz.* ignorant Nature, Perſon, Offices, they have neither a head or hearty knowledge of Chriſt; their minds are blind, and underſtandings darkned. The firſt work God doth to prepare Sinners for Heaven, is to open their eyes, and to bring them into the light of Life: But to theſe, God, Chriſt, Faith, Repentance is a Myſtery. A Woman being asked by a Miniſter, *Whether Chriſt, by whom ſhe expected Salvation was a Man or a Woman?* Anſwered, *She could not tell.* Are ſuch ready, ſhall they be ſaved, who are under the power of the Prince of Darkneſs? *Righteous Father* (ſaid Chriſt) *the World hath not known thee*, Joh. 17. 25. And truly Heaven is no more in Hell, than Preparation for it is in an ignorant Perſon. Thoſe who are made fit for Heaven, are delivered from the power of darkneſs, *Col.* 1. 12, 13. Under the Law, God would not accept of blind Sacrifices, *Deut.* 15. 21. *Pſal.* 11. 27. 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. O then, cry after knowledge, and liſt up thy voice for underſtanding; take hold of inſtruction, and let her not go, for ſhe is thy life, *Prov.* 2. 2. without knowledge the heart cannot be good nor fit for God and Heaven.

2. What

hat ſhall we think of thoſe that reſt in outward priviledges? who being born of blood, and of the will of the fleſh, and by timely Education have attained the knowledge of ſound Principles, and way of Salvation, but were never awakened, convinced, and under any diſtreſs about their Souls, are theſe ready for Chriſt and *Heaven*? *John* 8. 39. *Rom.* 7. 9. *Rev.* 3. 17. *The whole need not the Phyſician*, ſaid Chriſt. Thoſe who are ſtrangers to the Spirit of Bondage, and Pangs of the new Birth, who never ſaw thoſe treaſures of wrath due to Sin; he that was never heard to ſay, I am unclean, I am caſt down, I am heavy laden, I am loſt, I am undone, I die, I am damned, if Chriſt and mercy come not ſpeedily. Without Conviction, there can be no Converſion. A Woman travels, and then brings forth a Child, *Acts* 2. 36. 16. 30. Many ſteal quietly to *Hell*, few or none go ſmoothly to *Heaven*. Men commonly paſs thorow the Straits, before they enter into the *Harbor* or *Haven* of Reſt. The Laſh of the Law is our Schoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt, *Gal.* 3. 24. But alas! Thouſands are deluded with a cheap Converſion, that never had a ſick Night, or a pained

Soul for Sin. Indeed all are not con[illegible] with a voice of Thunder, and brought [illegible] Christ with a mighty rushing Wind, and terrible tempest and consternation of Spirit. Christ may steal secretly into the heart, as into *Lydia*, but 'tis very seldom. Security sends many to Hell, whereas a sore Conscience is better than a seared Conscience, aud a burning Ague is more hopeful than a Lethargy.

3. What think you of the *Belilialts* and *Damme's*, who curse *Jacob*, and defie *Israel*? *viz.* That deride holiness, and make a sport of sin, and stare in the Face of their Creator, and dare God to kill and damn them every day. There are who live as if they were sent into the world to do nothing but sin, serve the Devil, and ruine themselves. What droves and multitudes of libidinous profane persons are there in every place? How is the broad way crouded with men of corrupt minds, and cursed practices, who drop Poison as they go, and ride Post to Hell? These scarlet Sinners will break thorow all dangers to have their Lusts satisfied; as *Nero's* Mother said, *Let him kill me, so he may reign.*

Occidat modo imperet.

Let

let the Devil damn us, ſo we may have the ſweet of ſin. Theſe do not believe a day of eternal retribution after death: And are they prepared for Chriſt and Heaven, who are ready for the Devil and Hell?

4. What are the ſpiritually barren under all the dreſſings and dews of Heaven, and the abundance of Apoſtates in heart and practice? We may take up *David's* Lamentation upon the death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, and ſay with grief, *How are the mighty fallen?* The Falling Sickneſs hath been very rife, and an Epidemical Diſeaſe among us. Theſe are days of as many inſtances of Apoſtaſie and Back ſliding, and that from as high and glorious Pitches as any Age ſince the Apoſtles days can parallel. How many Stars have been caſt from Heaven? How many Trees plucked up by the Roots? Many ſeeming Stars are diſcovered to be but Meteors, and now gone down in obſcurity, Are theſe ready for Chriſt? The Penny will not be paid until the Evening; the End crowns the Action. He that preſſeth on, and runs to the End of the Race, ſhall have the Prize, *Ezek.* 3. 20. *Mat.* 24. 12, 13. *Hebr.* 6. 4. 11. 38, 39. 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. *Rev.* 2. 10.

5. What think you of those Millions of unholy Worldlings, who trade altogether for the Earth, and lay up no Treasure in Heaven? Their Gold, Silver, Houses, Lands, Wives, Children, are their God. They desire no better Heaven, than to be perpetuated in the Honours, Profits and Pleasures of the world. *I would not leave my part in* Paris, *for my part in* Paradise, said a prophane Wretch. A Noble Man of *Vienna* at his great Feast, and in the midst of his Jollity, said, *If God would leave me my Riches, and suffer me to live but a Thousand years to take my pleasure, I would willingly leave God his Heaven.* The Children of *Reuben* and *Gad*, being enriched with the spoil of their Enemies, and come into a good Land, desired to have it for their Inheritance, and not to go into the promised Land, *Numb.* 32. 1, 2, 3, 4. Are they prepar'd for Heaven, who can take the world for their portion, *Mat.* 19. 23.

6. What are the Thousands and Ten thousands of Christ and mercy-slighting Sinners, many of which will not come within the sound of the Silver Trumpets, (*viz.*) to wait upon God in the Use of means. There are who seem to be resolved to throw

their Souls to Hell. God commands to do no Murder, and Self-Murder is wondred at, becauſe the care of Life, and fear of Death, is planted in Man's Nature; but Self deſtruction, Self-damnation, is very common. There are who will ſay, We are no Thieves, nor Murderers, nor Adulterers, or Drunkards, but to be Chriſt-ſlighters is worſe, and more damnable. This made Chriſt grieve, ſigh, weep, in a melting manner over *Jeruſalem*; and his compaſſionate bewailing of them, was enough to turn ſtones into tears, nevertheleſs they wilfully refuſed him, *Mat.* 23. 37. This will be ſad, like the impenitent Thief, to periſh, and a Saviour by his ſide. We read of a whole City, upon the loſs of their Swine, entreated Chriſt to be gone out of their Coaſts, *Mat.* 8. *ult.* Are theſe ready to wear the Crown of Glory?

7. Add to theſe, thoſe, (and not a few) who hold not the head, but execrable and abominable Opinions, which they pertinaciouſly defend. If men make not the Perſon of the Mediator the Object of their Faith and Hope, and with the *Sadduces*, deny the Reſurrection of the Body, Are they prepar'd to go in with Chriſt? Hereſie is reck-

reckoned amongſt the worſt of the ſins of the Fleſh: 'tis a ſpiritual witchcraft, and a covert, cloſe way to Hell. Not only wicked practices, but corrupt opinions will damn mens Souls. 2 *Pet.* 2. *Paul* told the erroneous *Galatians*, *They were bewitched*. When mens Cattel, or the Bodies of their Children are bewitched, how ſad is it? but 'tis more dreadful to have Souls bewitched. There are an abundance of vertiginous, leprous Heads in this Nation. Head-diſeaſes are hardly cured, they do often kill. *Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know theſe things before, beware leſt ye alſo being led away with the erreur of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs*, 2 Pet. 3. 17.

8. Join to theſe your Sinners in *Zion*, and Tares among the Wheat, the falſe-hearted Profeſſors, and thoſe who think their good Intentions and own Righteouſneſs will ſave them. This Golden Idol of Self-Righteouſneſs hath ſhut many out of Heaven, *Mat.* 5. 20. *Luke* 18. 11, 12, 13. *Rom.* 10. 3.

9. What are thoſe that ſay they are too young, and it is too ſoon to part with ſin, and prepare for heaven, Are ſuch ready for the Bridegroom's coming? Theſe do not con-

wonder that more die young, than live long; and how little Graves, ſmall Bones, and Skulls of all ſizes are in our Burial-places. Our Proverb is, *That the Lambs-skin many times comes to the Market before the Sheeps-skin. The young men are dead*, 'tis ſaid of *Job*'s Sons, *Job* 1. 17. Again, enquire about the time of mens Converſion, and you will find few converted in old Age: 'Tis almoſt a Prodigy to ſee an old man or woman convert and turn to God. Moreover, thoſe who put off their preparation for heaven, do not know what a life of joy and pleaſure they live, who have taſted the ſweet of Religion, and gotten Evidence for heaven early. And who can tell what an abundance of young men and women are now in flame? The ſins of Youth *David* pray'd for the pardon of, *Pſal.* 25.

10. And laſtly, What will you ſay of fooliſh Virgins, Are they prepared for the Eternal World? Here are Virgins unready, ſuppoſe they repreſent particular Churches, half had not Oil in their Veſſels. What if you ſhould be ſuch? St. *Paul* telleth the Church of *Corinth*, he had eſpouſed them as a chaſte Virgin to Chriſt,

and

and yet there were bad Members a[illegible] them. They were convinced Virgins th[illegible] made a profeſſion, and kept themſelves from groſs pollution, *Mat.* 25. 1. They were found in their Principles, no Hereticks, they expected Chriſt coming. They were in high eſteem, and did ſhine as Lights, their Lamps did burn, and they went on in Religion for a time. How many are pleas'd with the name or reputation of being Religious, they would be thought good: *Is thy heart right*, (ſaid *Jehu*) *as my heart is?* The wiſe Virgins thought well of them, and that they had been prepared. The Diſciples thought well of *Judas*, and *Paul* of *Demas*; they were in a complaining condition, and ſenſible of the want of grace, and came for a ſupply to the wiſe Virgins, but 'twas too late. Laſtly, their expectation was high, and their confidence held out to the laſt. They came boldly to the door, and pray'd for admiſſion.

You have heard there is a numberleſs number unready, and truly you may as ſoon find ſweet Flowers growing upon the Sea, and Fiſh upon the Mountains, yea, Pearls upon the tops of Trees, as Preparation for Heaven in carnal hearts. Now to faſten this

Truth

...s a Nail in a ſure place, Ask thy ...eſe Queſtions, that thou mayſt know to which ſort thou belongeſt.

1. Queſt. *Am not I the poor blind Soul whom the Goſpel ſaith is loſt?*

2. Queſt. *Have I been ſavingly ſenſible of Sin, and the want of a Saviour? Did I ever taſte of ſpiritual Grief, or godly Sorrow? Is Sin as a Talent of Lead, or as light as a Feather to me?*

3. Queſt. *Is not my Name among the dead in* Jeruſalem, *and in the Liſt of prodigious Sinners who look like Hell it ſelf?*

Read over the Catalogue of the ſins of the fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. And ſay, Are not theſe my Sins?

4. Queſt. *Am not I the Man went out of* Babylon *to* Zion, *that ſet Sail for Heaven, and once ſeem'd a bright Star,* viz. *a forward, active, zealous Chriſtian, and diligent in duties, now become a Comet? Where is my Fervour and Affection? Is not my Latter End likely to be worſe than the Beginning? What is Profeſſion, without Progreſſion?*

5. Queſt. *Am not I an Idolatrous Worldling, whoſe Name is written in Earth, and whoſe Portion is in this Life,* Pſal. 17. 14. Luke 6. 24. Col. 3. 5. James 5. 1.

6. Queſt.

6. Queſt. *May not I be rankt amo[ng] deſperate Chriſt-rejecting Sinners, over whoſe head God's wrath hangs.*

7. Queſt. *Do I hold no corrupt, dangerous, damnable Opinion, contrary to the Form of Sound Words, and the Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Martyrs,* 2 Tim. 1. 14.

8. Queſt. *Do I not build upon the rotten ſandy Foundation of mine own Righteouſneſs? What beſide my good Purpoſes, my Baptiſm, and ſome imperfect Performances, and vain Hopes have I to ſatisfie God, and to entitle me to Heaven?* Matth. 7. 22.

9. Queſt. *Do I not think it too ſoon to believe, love God, and live a ſtrict pious Life? Should I be a Loſer to part with my Luſts, and give my heart to Chriſt?*

10. Queſt. *Am not I a fooliſh Virgin? Let God and all your Conſciences judge in this caſe. Sinner, May I not ſay to thee, as* Nathan *to* David, *Thou art the Man, not ready for Chriſt and Heaven. When God created the firſt Man, he gave him a Name that anſwered to his Original; Doſt thou know thy Name when thou readeſt it, or heareſt it? Then thus it is:*

If thou belongeſt to the firſt of theſe, *Ignoramus* is thy Name. If to the ſecond

ſort,

Senſleſs, Secure Sleeper is thy Name. If to the third, *Senſualiſt*, or *Fleſh-Indulger* is thy Name. If to the fourth, *Back ſlider* is thy Name. If to the fifth, *Mammoniſt*, or *Man of the Earth* is thy Name. If thou belongeſt to the ſixth, *Self-Murderer* is thy Name. If to the ſeventh, *Heretick* is thy Name. If to the eighth, *Juſtitiary* is thy Name. If to the ninth ſort, *Trifling-time Delayer* is thy Name. If to the laſt, *Counterfeit Chriſtian*, or *Silly Soul-deluder* is thy Name. Poor wretched Man, thy Name is ominous, and doth preſage evil to come upon thee in the latter end. *Nabal* is his name, and as his name, ſo is he. But is there no Remedy? yes, part with thy curſed luſts, and receive the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt have a new, moſt excellent and honourable name, firſt given to the Diſciples at *Antioch*; Chriſtian, ſhall be thy Name.

Now having heard what an abundance are unready, I ſhall go on with the moſt important *Uſe of Exhortation*. If you have any belief of the World to come, or regard to your ſpiritual welfare, as you will ſtand with joy and boldneſs in the day of Judgment, before the great and terrible God,

God, let it be the preſent and great[illegible] neſs of your lives to prepare and make ready for your deareſt Lord. Friend, to be kind to thine own Soul, is that I do here perſwade thee unto. And I ſhall begin with you that are young, who are to be the Seminary and Plants in God's Nurſery, when thoſe that are grave and more aged are laid up in their Graves. *The Lord God of my Maſter* Abraham, *ſend me good ſpeed*, was the Prayer of a faithful Servant, when going to procure a Wife for *Iſaac*, Gen. 24. St. *Paul*, who was a young Perſecutor, and ſoon converted to be a Preacher, exhorts young men to *flie youthful luſts*; there are many of them, 2 *Tim.* 2. 22. How many ſtrong and perilous Temptations are incident to Youth? There is no ſuch glaſſy, ſlippery piece of way between you and Heaven, as Youth. *Beware*, ſaith a Divine, *of this green young Devil, the hot and fiery paſſions of Youth*: That true Father in God *John*, writes to young Men, who were Believers, betimes. *Youth and Grace, Chriſt and a young Man, or a young Woman, are a ſweet Couple*, (ſaith the ſame Author.) Old *Jacob* commanded his Sons to carry down to *Joſeph* the beſt Fruits of the Land of *Canaan*, Gen. 43. 11.

This

Primroſe or Spring-Flower of Grace and Virtue, will be very grateful to ſweet Jeſus. Young Men and young Women hearken to the advice of him, who knew by ſweet experience how good it was to begin with God early, *Eccleſ.* 12. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. The Kingdom of Heaven* (ſaith Chriſt) *is like a man that is an Houſholder, which went out early to hire Labourers into his Vineyard*, Mat. 22. 1. Will you in the *Aurora*, or golden morning of your Youth, go about your Maſter's work, or rather your own. *Mine offerings are for a ſweet ſavour unto me*, (ſaith the Lord) *ye ſhall obſerve to offer in their ſeaſon: The young Bullock, and Lambs of the firſt year, are for the Lord*, Numb. 28. The godly Child mentioned in the little Book, when it ſaw the Tokens of Death on it, cry'd out, *I am markt.* Death was welcome to it, being markt for Chriſt, and ready for Heaven. Thou haſt promiſed to be the Lord's before this day, and a free-will Offering vowed was not to be releaſed, *Numb.* 30. The Daughters of *Zelophehad* (being young Virgins) ſued for an Inheritance among their Brethren, (*viz.*) to have a Lot in the Holy Land. Do you ſeek for

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an Inheritance among Believers in the [illegible] ter Countrey? *Heaven* is before you, and God bids you, as once *Abraham* and *Lot*, to make your choice; he expects it, who will requite your youthful kindness. *Jer.* 2. 12. *No Wife to the Wife of the Youth.* In the morning resolve to sow the seed of Vertue, and thou shalt reap. *Sanctifie to me the first-born*, saith the Lord. Deal by thy Soul, as *Hannah* did with her Son, who gave him to the Lord. 'Tis the best time for such a designation; and if thou dost intend heaven, remember who saith, *My Son, give me thy heart*, Prov. 2. 26. Be holy, and thou shalt be accepted. Sinner, thou canst not make too much haste to heaven. When did you hear a young Woman, being espoused to a Person comely, rich, wise, and honourable, say, It was too soon for such an advantage. Let this day be thy Marriage-day; Marriage is honourable, especially this Marriage, it being to the King's Son and Heir of heaven: And if none have been converted that heard these Sermons, O that you that read them may be the First-fruits, *Exod.* 34. 26. *Micah* 7. 1. *Rom.* 15. 5. It hath been and is the best sight in *England*, and in our Assemblies, to see so many young Faces

...es towards heaven, ready to go in with Chriſt. To perſwade you to beſtow the dew of your Youth on Chriſt, and that your reſolution for heaven may as a mighty torrent carry down all before it,

Take theſe Incentives:

1. The Church is called a Virgin, Chriſt the Bridegroom, and the flouriſhing Age of Youth muſt be the beſt time to make this Match. The Birds chuſe their Mates in the Spring; the young Bees, when thruſt out by the old ones, work in the Summer for honey in the Winter. The Marriages of the aged, when Men ſhould think of a Grave, are wondred at, and ſomewhat rare. Sinner, the time of Youth is the choiceſt and fitteſt ſeaſon for thy Soul. Now, thine Affections, *viz.* Deſire, Love, Joy, Delight, (the wings and feet of thy Soul, to carry thee to the Arms and Boſom of Chriſt) are ripe and flouriſh. While thy Love is warm, ſtrong, and all thy Senſes and Faculties quick, lively, active, place them on ſweet Jeſus, Timouſneſs or Priority we muſt have ever reſpect unto in this grand Affair; as the Woman came to Chriſt's Grave early, *Luke* 24.1. ſo early muſt

muſt we get grace. How excellent is it a young Man, or Maid, to have ſuch a ſpring of grace as to invite Chriſt to come and dwell with him, *Cant.* 4. *ult.* The Owner of the Garden delights to ſee the young Plants bud, bloſſom, and bear Fruit, *Cant.* 6. 11. To trade with God for the Oil of Grace, and to prepare for Heaven early, is the richeſt Trade in the world. Say with him, who was pious in his Youth, and could tell what God had done for his Soul, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee,* Pſal. 63. 1. 73. 25. Do as the primitive Chriſtians, who gave themſelves to the Lord, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. It may be thou art poor in the world, and haſt not Gold, Frankincenſe and Myrrhe to offer unto thy God, nor a thouſand Rams, and ten thouſand Rivers of Oil, yet thou haſt an Heart which is a Preſent for a Prince, a Gift for the great God. *Lord, ſuch as I have, I give thee*; and 'tis thine own, my Body and my Soul I reſign to thee, *Rom.* 12. 1. This is the Male; do not bring the Blind, the Lame, and the Maimed, leſt he ſay to thee, as to thoſe ſacrilegious perſons, *Go offer it to thy Governor, ſee whether he will accept of it*; where thou haſt ſpent the beſt

of

thy Flowre, beſtow thy Bran. Let the World, Fleſh and Devil, that have had thy Youth, have the Snuffs and Dregs of old Age too. Sinner, ſtay till old Age, and no thanks to part with thy Sins, Sin will leave thee; when the Oil is waſted, the Lamp will go out. Then ſtand forth young Man, and ſay to God, as *Ahab* to *Benhadad*, *I am thine, and all that I have.* My head and my heart is thine, my feet and my hands, and all is thine. My heart is thine to love thee, my head is thine to plot for thee, my hands ſhall work for thee, my feet ſhall go for thee, my tongue ſhall ſpeak to thee and for thee: If I had a thouſand hearts, Lord, thou ſhouldſt have them all. This is to honour him with thy Firſt-fruits, *Prov.* 3. 9. *Jam.* 1. 16.

2. Break off from the Devil and Sin early, and gather up this heavenly hidden *Mannæ* of Divine Grace in the morning, and go forward, and thou wilt be a Mother in *Iſrael*, or a Father in God's Family. The new born Babe will come to be a young man, and a young man a Father. The hot fiery Luſts of Youth is the Devil in his Flowers, (*ſaith one.*) In Youth the Devil finds dry Sticks, and dry Coals, and an Hearth

Hearth Stone, and how ſoon can he [illegible] his Flint caſt Fire, and with his Bellows blow it up, and fire the Houſe: Therefore get Grace betimes into the Gariſon of thy heart, that thou may'ſt be able to repel his helliſh Temptations. 'Tis Chriſt's delight to be early in the Vineyard, *Cant.* 7. 12. Trees that bloſſom in the Spring, are moſt fruitful and moſt uſeful. God made choice of the *Almond* Tree, ('tis ſaid) becauſe it bloſſomed firſt. When the Image of Heaven is ſtampt early upon a Man's Soul, ſuch ordinarily attain great eminency in Grace and Holineſs. *Moſes*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Daniel*, *Timothy*, began with God betime, and were in the Upper Form in God's School, and Stars of the firſt Magnitude. *Obadiah* feared the Lord from his Youth, and how uſeful was he? *Firſt ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 6. 33. 'Tis an honour to be firſt in Chriſt, and firſt converted in a Town or Family. But to be the firſt Drunkard, the firſt Adulterer, the firſt Perſecutor, or the firſt Inventer of fantaſtick, diſguiſed Faſhions, and wicked Practices, deſerves to be branded with Infamy and Reproach. Seniority or Priority in the Faith and true Piety, is a praiſe. *Rom.* 6. 5. *Salute*

Andronicus *and* Junia *who are of Note,* (ſaith *Paul*) *and were in Chriſt before me.* Whereas to be a young Sabbath-breaker, a young Fornicator, a young Thief, a young Atheiſt, is a horrible ſhame and ignominy. On the contrary, to be firſt in God's fear and favor, and to have early experience of Chriſt's love, is both commendable and comfortable.

3. Delay is the ſad Character of the wicked Servant, and very deceitful and dangerous for thy Soul, *Mat.* 24. 48. To linger and procraſtinate in a matter of this moment, is a trick and cheat of the old Serpent to undo thee for ever. *To day, to day,* ſaith the great Landlord and Limiter of our time. *To morrow hereafter,* (ſaith the Devil.) To whoſe voice, Sinner, wilt thou liſten, to God, or the Devils? *Haſte, for thy Life, ſtay not,* ſaid the Angel to *Lot.* If he had ſtay'd a little longer, he had been burnt. Will you by delays pleaſe the Devil, and make Whips and Stings for your ſelves, treaſure up wrath, this is to add to the Heap, and bring Fuel to the Fire, that muſt burn upon thee to Eternity. But what need ſuch haſte? the Thief went from the Croſs to the Crown the ſame

day. Do not truſt to that, it was but one Thief, and he a Prodigy, and truly penitent. Suppoſe God ſhould ſay to thee that art young, as once *Joſeph* to his Brethren, *Except your younger Brother come with you, ye ſhall not ſee my Face.* If thou doſt not ſerve, fear and obey me in thy Youth, thou ſhalt never obtain my favour. Trees that bloſſom not till *Autumn*, afford little Fruit. The Inhabitants of *China* marry their Children very young, to prevent their Debauchery. I will not ſay of the hoary Head, there is no hope, becauſe ſome few in the Evening, or ſeventh hour, have been called and come to Chriſt: But with fear and trembling conſider, thou that ſayſt to day it is too ſoon, to morrow may with anguiſh of Soul cry out it is too late. 'Tis good for a man to bear the Yoke in his Youth, *i. e.* Chriſt's Yoke, not the Devil's Yoke, whoſe Slaves and Drudges he will make you, until he damn you. What a grief is it, that youthful Sins and old Bones ſhould meet in the Grave, *Job* 28. 11.

4. Divine Precepts and Promiſes are to the preſent time, none for hereafter. The Imperative Mood hath no Future Tenſe.

Seek-

seeking out of season hath had no success. While *Esau* was hunting, he lost the Blessing. *Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came. Seek the Lord while he may be found*, Isa. 55. 7. Prov. 8. 17. Are not the shadows of the Evening stretched out over some of you. Gray hairs are here and there, they will tell you the night is near: Look up you old and young Loiterers, and see whether your Morning Sun is not past its Meridian, yea, near its setting. Dost thou not see many young men die, and go before thee to the Grave? Art thou certain of another day? Will not God reckon with thee for so rich a Talent, and treasure of time put into thy hand? What meanest thou, O Sluggard, O Sleeper, awake, arise, pray, prepare, that thou perish not. Thy Lord intends to come, how wilt thou fear and tremble to look him in the Face, and thy work not done! Sinner, go home and mourn over this great and irreparable loss, the loss of thy precious time. And now before Death draweth the black shade over thee, set all things at rights betwixt God and thy Soul. And if thy

Soul and Heaven depend upon an inch of time, do not waſte it for a world.

5. To know, fear, love and ſerve God in our Youth, is the beſt comfort of old Age. A young Saint, and an old Angel; is a true ſaying.

Here I ſubjoin Motives for Saints and ſinners, to prepare; and means and directions in order to it.

1. *Mo.* Conſider with greateſt ſeriouſneſs the ſure paſſing excellency, dignity, and glory of the Perſon, for whoſe ſweet and delightful preſence thou muſt prepare. Here I am at a loſs, and know not how to think, ſpeak, or write of this infinite, matchleſs, and tranſcendent beauty and glory of Chriſt; which will keep all created Tongues of Men and Angels in exerciſe, and buſie night and day to ſpeak of it. Now if you would have a glimpſe of this glorious One, view his Titles, and hear what a true Character they give of him, who have ſeen him, not face to face, but through a Glaſs darkly. Chriſtians, You are invited to ſee this King, and Son of the higheſt in his glory. *Cant.* 3. 11. *Go ye forth, O ye daughters of* Zion, *and be-*

a King Solomon, *with the Crown wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the day of his Eſpouſals.* Chriſt appeared to *John* in wonderful Luſtre and Majeſty, cloathed with a Garment down to the Ground, girt with a golden Girdle, his Head and his Hair white as Snow, his Eyes as a Flame of Fire, his Countenance as the Sun ſhining in his ſtrength, *Rev.*1.13,14. O what a fair One, what an onely One, what an excellent, lovely, raviſhing One is Chriſt? Put the beauty of Ten thouſand Worlds of Paradiſes, like the Garden of *Eden*, put all Trees, all Flowers, all Smells, all Colours, all Taſtes, all Joys, all Sweetneſs, all Lovelineſs in one. O what a fair excellent thing would it be? and yet it ſhould be leſs to the deareſt and faireſt, Beloved, than one drop of rain to the whole Sea, Lakes, Rivers, and Fountains of ten thouſand Earths, (*ſaith a famous Divine.*) The Church who had the moſt acquaintance with this King of Glory, affirms, *He is altogether lovely*, Cant.5.10. And do you expect his Company and Preſence in Heaven, and not prepare? If a Man be to eat with the Ruler, he will make himſelf ready. *Joſeph* ſhaved himſelf,

ſelf, and put off his Priſon garments wherein he was to appear in *Pharaoh*'s preſence. Is it fit Swine ſhould come into a King's Preſence-Chamber? The Maids that went into *Ahaſuerus*, were for ſix Months to be purified with Oil of Myrrhe, and ſweet Odors. Art thou a filthy Swine, or Goat, and durſt come before the King of Glory? *His Wife hath made her ſelf ready*, *Rev.* 19. 7, 8. Friend, Doſt thou love and look for Chriſt, and pleaſe thy ſelf with the thoughts of ſeeing of him, and not caſt off thy ſins as a menſtruous cloth. *Peter* expreſſeth his love to his Lord, by profeſſing he was not only ready to go to Priſon, but to die for his ſake, *Luke* 22.33. Was *Peter* and *Paul* ready to ſuffer and die for Chriſt, and will you not make ready to live and reign with Chriſt in Heaven for ever.

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2. *Mo.* The Red Dragon and Old Serpent the Devil, that deſigns thy Eternal Woe, makes it his main buſineſs to hinder this work, therefore make ready. *Tobiah* and *Sanballat* were not ſo buſie to retard, and hinder the building of *Jeruſalem* and Temple, as the Devil is to hinder thy

preparation for Heaven. He hath his Devices, his Wiles, his Depths, and all employed to impede and obſtruct this work. Here I ſhall endeavour to detect ſome of the ſtratagems of this active and malicious Adverſary the Devil.

Q. *How doth Satan hinder this Work?*

Anſ. 1. By ſuggeſting delays, and putting off our duty, and to this end he will perſwade,

1. Though it may and muſt be done, it is too ſoon, another ſeaſon is better than the preſent time.

2. That there is no life ſo ſweet as a life of ſin and ſenſuality.

3. That preparation for Heaven is a ſhort and eaſie work, and may be done hereafter, or when we will. Sinner, If thou doſt think it eaſie to repent, believe, and change thy heart, and ſecure Heaven at any time. Let me ask thee, Canſt make another World, and keep the whole Laws? Canſt raiſe the dead, or live here for ever? Thou mayſt do one as well as the other.

2. By withdrawing men from the uſe of powerful and awaking means, in which they may meet with Chriſt, and be converted.

3. By repreſentig the difficulty and

impoſſibility of a ſtrict and pious [illegible] inſinuate and faſten this Temptation, [illegible] Devil will make Men believe,

1. That there is no abſolute neceſſity of ſuch preciſeneſs.

2. That Men may live ill, and die well. Go in the way to Hell, and come to Heaven.

3. That no Man can live ſuch a life; if ſo, 'tis a ſad, penſive life, and no way eligible, or to be choſen.

4. By raiſing prejudice and evil thoughts in mens minds againſt the Preachers and Profeſſors of the Goſpel; ſuch as theſe:

1. That the beſt are not ſo good towards God, as they ſeem to the world, but falſe and counterfeit.

2. That thy ſin is ſecret, and in corners, though not openly, and in the face of the Sun: And becauſe of the groſſer faults, and miſcarriage of ſome, and the weakneſſes, infirmities, and paſſions of others, they will think well of none. Here note, 'tis a curſed deſign of Hell, to put bad Men upon the Profeſſion of Religion, on purpoſe to diſgrace it, and render it odious to the world.

5. By

5. By abusing and misapplying the Doctrine of Election and Predestination, so as to infer and draw from it wild and desperate Conclusions.

6. By suggesting to poor desponding Souls, that the day of Grace, and time of preparation for Heaven is over.

7. By corrupting and poisoning Mens Judgments with heretical and damnable Opinions and Principles. There's many a Man's head hath brought him to Hell. To instance,

1. That Scripture is not of Divine Authority; That the World was from Eternity; That Religion is a meer Fiction; That Regeneration, Faith, Repentance, Communion with Christ, is but Moral Virtue; That Men may be saved of any Religion; That Hell is a Bug-bear, and Heaven a Fool's Paradise: But let God and his Word be true, and every Blasphemer a Liar.

8. By calming and quieting Mens Consciences with an outside and carnal Religion, and good purposes.

9. By proposing false Grounds and Evidences for Heaven, *viz.* That Conviction, and legal Terror is Conversion; That an

honeſt, civil, ſober life, without C[illegible] and faith in him, will bring Men to Heaven. Theſe are the Fig-leafs Men ſowe together, who walk in the ſparks and light of their own fire, *Iſa.* 50.

10. By ſuggeſting the numberleſs number of Non-Profeſſors, and theſe many of them honourable, rich, learned wiſe men, and that it will be of dangerous conſequence openly to own and practiſe Religion, and therefore they cannot prepare for Chriſt, and purchaſe Heaven at ſo dear a rate. Sinner, Let me tell thee, whatever Satan doth make thee believe, thou haſt no cauſe to take a minute reſt while unready.

Mo. 3. There are multitudes of careleſs Souls (as you have heard) aſleep and ſecure, who will be ſadly diſappointed; tremble, leſt it ſhould be your caſe. *Wo to them that are at eaſe in* Zion. Carnal ſecurity, riſing from Self-ignorance, Self-righteouſneſs, and hope of future Repentance, is a ſecret Enemy, like an Impoſthume, never manifeſting it ſelf, but when immediately killing. In the great Houſe of God the Church, are not only Veſ-

...els of Gold, but of Wood, Earth and Stone, *ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 20. There are who have not the Title or Name of Virgins, much leſs the Nature. Some have not ſo much love to Chriſt and his Goſpel, as to profeſs it. They loath to be in company with the ſincere Saints of Chriſt, neither will they take any pains for their immortal Souls, but wholly neglect the performing of thoſe duties, and gaining thoſe graces neceſſary for preparation. The Children of the great King, and Favourites of Heaven do make ready; let this be as a goad in your ſide to provoke and quicken you. The Veſſels of the Temple for Sacred Uſe, were pure poliſhed Veſſels: Chriſtians, you are deſigned to ſtand in God's preſence, to ſee his Face, and lodge in his boſom to Eternity; therefore you muſt not love and follow whom you pleaſe. *The King's Daughter is glorious within, and her Clothing is of wrought Gold. She ſhall be brought to the King in Raiment of Needle-work, and the Virgins her Companions follow her*, Pſal. 45. 13, 14. Sons and Daughters muſt be received, when Dogs and Swine are ſhut out. *Hagar*

and

and *Iſhmael* are turned out, *Sarah* *Iſaac* ſtay in the Family. Now ſenſual, ſecure Sinner, whoſe example wilt thou follow? the Devil's Herd, or thoſe inſtances and patterns of Piety that make ready. 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Phil.* 3. 17. Great *Alexander* being asked, *Whether he would exerciſe himſelf in the* Olympian *Games?* Anſwered, *Yea, if I may run with Kings.* The Saints of the moſt High are honourable perſons, and prepare and run with them for this Crown and Kingdom. *Here is the Race, above is the Crown,* ſaid *Ignatius* the Martyr. *Run and get the Prize,* ſaid Mr. *Bradford* to his Fellow-Sufferers.

Mo. 4. Think upon the preſent, future and unſpeakable advantage of preparation for Heaven; Get an aſſurance of going in with Chriſt to Eternal Fellowſhip, and you need not fear. No Man or Woman can poſſibly get above the dread of Death and Hell, without a well-grounded hope of Heaven. The thoughts of a ſick Bed, and Death, the laſt Enemy, will be a ſtab to the Soul unready. What tremblings and ſhiverings of heart, and per-

...rbation of ſpirit, doth the thoughts ...r the Chambers of Death cauſe, till a man can ſay, 'Tis better for him to die, than to live. When a Man can reflect upon the Grace and Image of God in him, and ſees his Title to Heaven clear, it will prevent Armies of Fear, and Legions of Doubts. *Now 'tis no more for me to die, than to cloſe mine eyes*, ſaid a godly Miniſter. When a Man carries his Evidences for Heaven in his heart and hand, he will be chearful, and content with a ſmall pittance of the World. A holy poor Woman, whoſe Fare was often but Bread and Water, ſaid, *She would not change her Condition for the greateſt Lady in the Land.* Mr. *Jordan* of *Exeter* (to excite his Neighbours to make ſure for Heaven) was wont to ſay, *Brown bread and Kennel water was good Fare, with an Aſſurance of Heaven.* When a Chriſtian conſiders what he hath, is by Covenant with Chriſt, and be it more or leſs, 'tis for his good, and beſt for him. How refreſhing and comfortable is a little? I might have been wealthy and wicked, and eat the fat, drink the ſweet, and enjoy many outward comforts, and no Chriſt. I

might have had a Farm, a Manno[illegible], Apparel, delicate Fare, many Servants and Attendants, but Sins, Snares, and the Curſe of God on all, and at laſt have gone to Hell. Moreover, the aſſurance of going in with Chriſt, will deaden the heart to the world, and make a man willing to leave all for Chriſt; yea, it will reconcile a godly man to the ſharpeſt Providences, and ſevereſt ſtroke of God's Hand. It will make a Chriſtian ſuffer willingly, and bear the Croſs patiently and comfortably. When that great Sufferer lookt up to his exceeding eternal weight of Glory, his Afflictions ſeemed light. The hope of Heaven will lighten and ſweeten any Affliction, *Hebr.* 10. 34. *Latimer* rejoiced when his Biſhoprick was taken from him. Dr. *Taylor* leapt for joy when going to be burned. *If you leſſen or abate any thing of my Sufferings*, (ſaid the Martyr) *it will be to my loſs.* At *Stratford-Bowe* were burned in Queen *Mary*'s days, at one Stake, a lame Man, and a blind Man. The lame Man, after he was chained, caſt away his Crutch, bade the blind Man, *Be of good comfort, for Death would heal them both*; ſo they patient-

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...ered with a calm and ſedate mind. ...gain, Preparation for Heaven will make a Man go ſinging in the way of the Lord, and cauſe our duties to flow from us, like water from a Fountain; and free-will offerings are always beſt and moſt grateful to God. In fine, due Preparation for going in with Chriſt, will be an effectual means to prevent that active Adverſary the Devil, who improves all opportunities and advantages againſt God's poor People, eſpecially their weakneſſes, when they are brought low in body and mind too. 'Tis ſaid of the natural Serpent, *Non niſi moriens in longam producitur*, he is never at his full length till dying. When a godly Man is dying, the old Serpent ſhews himſelf, lets out his ſting, but an aſſurance of God's favour will quench his fiery darts.

Mo. 5. Chriſt's long abſence, God's unwearied patience, and all the calls, threatnings, warnings and alarms of the Word are, that Men ſhould make ready for him, and eſcape the wrath that is to come. Why are means and Miniſters continued, and the offers of Grace by the Goſpel renewed, but to bring Souls over unto Chriſt,

Christ, and safe to Heaven? He sent for other Servants, *Matth.* 22. The first in the morning, others at the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour. Why is the cry at midnight, but to raise and rouze up the sleepier Virgins to make ready? There are four Crys God makes use on, to startle and awaken Men to mind their Souls business.

1. The first is, the cry or voice of the Spirit, which is a more secret and still voice to excite us unto our duty. The Holy Ghost saith, *To day*. The Spirit saith, *Come*. *Rev. ult.*

2. There is the cry of the Word, *This is as the voice of a Trumpet*, Isa. 58. 1. *John* the Baptist was a Cryer: *Go and cry in the ears of* Jerusalem, *said the Lord*, *Jer.* 2. 2.

3. There's the cry of the Rod: *The Lord's voice cryed unto the City* Samaria, *Hos.*

4. There is also the cry of Conscience. All which serve to prompt us to our duty, and prepare us for Eternity. Christ had kindled the Fire upon the Earth, and burnt it, and set up his Tribunal, and sounded the Trumpet of Judgment long before, but

that

He is willing to ſave undone ſinners. 2 Pet. 3. 9. *His long-ſuffering to us-ward, is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance.*

Mora ſponſi pœnitentiæ tempus eſt.

The delay of the Bridegroom, is the time of Repentance. There's not a Sabbath day, nor a Sacrament day, nor a Sermon day, after the Judgment day. Now God warns by his Judgments, waits to be Gracious, calls by his Miniſters, ſtrives by his Spirit, and you may be welcome to him. And upon your Repentance, and cloſing with Chriſt, you ſhall be juſtified, pardoned, accepted, and taken into the Marriage, and Crowned: But ſtay a little longer, and the door is ſhut, and then all your Prayers, Crys, Tears, will be fruitleſs. O ſinner, ariſe; make haſte, and return unto the Lord before it be too late.

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6. *Mo.* Chriſt's coming will be certain, and you know not how ſoon, his Word is ſure. The ungodly carnal World will be ſwallowed up, and drowned in ſen-

ſenſuality before that day, as it was in the days of *Noah*, and many Profeſſors will be careleſs and ſecure: The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe. The promiſe to *Adam* of the Seed of the Woman, was many hundred years before Chriſt's Incarnation, who in the fulneſs of time came. 'Tis now more than Sixteen hundred Years ſince his going in Triumph, from Earth to Heaven: And though he ſeemeth long or late before he comes, he will certainly come at laſt.

Q. *But to whom doth the coming of the Lord ſeem long?*

Anſw Firſt, Chriſt's coming ſeems long to Atheiſtical Mockers, who ſay, *Where is the promiſe of his coming?* 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4.

2. To his ſuffering Members. Their cry to vindictive Juſtice is, *Lord, How long? Pſal.* 94. 3. *Rev.* 6. 10. If theſe days of ſin and miſery ſhould not be ſhortned, no fleſh could be ſaved.

3. Chriſt's coming is long to paſſionate Lovers, who prize his Preſence, and long to ſee his Perſon: *Haſte, my Beloved*, ſaid the longing Spouſe. But count upon it, he will not fail in coming. 'Tis the great Article of our Creed, *That Chriſt*

shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Moreover, he told his tender-hearted, and dearly beloved Disciples, (who were sad at the tidings of his going from them) he would come and see them again. And he hath, according to his promise, ever since sent another to supply his room, to teach, refresh and comfort them until he comes, and to keep the recent memory of him in their minds. He hath also once and again presented himself to the view of his suffering Saints, as ready to come and avenge their cause for them, *Acts* 7. 55. *Rev.* 1. 13, 18. And he hath often met them in his Ordinances, and holy Appointments, as an Answer of their Prayers. *He is come*, saith the Martyr. Many a token of his love, comfortable converse, and sweet meeting with Christ his Church hath had already, all which assures and tells us, that he will be with us in a little time. *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*, Hebr. 10.

2. Quest. *But how will he come? And why will he come?*

Ans. First, He will come Personally.

Secondly, He will come with Perspicuity.

Third-

Thirdly, He will come with Power and infinite Majesty.

Fourthly, He will come suddenly and unexpectedly.

1. Christians, Your dear Lord Jesus Christ will come personally. He will not only employ and send forth his glorious Attendants, their ministring Spirits the Angels, but come himself: He longed to come to his Cross to redeem us from Hell, he must needs love to appear with his Crown to fetch us to Heaven, *I will come unto you*, &c. It will be said unto you, to the comfort and ravishment of your Souls, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.* The same that suffered and ascended for you, shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation, *John* 14. 3. *Acts* 1. 11. *Hebr.* 9. 28. Christ's Person laid up in Heaven is our hope, *Col.* 1. 4. Take the Person of the Mediator out of the holy Scripture, and 'tis as a Cabinet without a Jewel. Take the Sun out of the Firmament, and it's a dark Curtain. Christ is all, and in all; and what is Heaven, if Christ were not there? The King makes the Court.

Second-

Secondly, Christ will come with wonderful and amazing perspicuity, and to the view of the whole world at once. There were but few that saw him in the Manger, nor many saw him in the Garden, in his Agony and bloody Sweat; or on the Cross between two Thieves, with his hands nailed, and his side pierced; but when he comes again, every eye shall see him. Men shall not say (as now) *Lo, here is Christ*; *or Lo, there is Christ*: *for as the Lightning that cometh out of the East, and shineth to the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be*, Mat. 24. 27. Note, Christ is called the Son of Man, for he hath his Humane Nature still: *I am he that was dead, and am now alive, and I live for evermore.* And though few in comparison were Spectators of him at his Crucifixion and Ascension, when he shall be on the Throne all shall behold him. *Rev.* 1. 7. *Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all Kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: Even so*, Amen. Christ's appearance will be a sad sight to two sorts of men.

1. To

1. To thoſe who do not believe in his Perſon.

2. To his bold and audacious Adverſaries, that violate his Commands, and oppoſe his Regal Authority, *Bring forth theſe mine enemies, and ſlay them before me.*

Thirdly, Chriſt will come with Power and infinite Majeſty: *For he hath all Power both in Heaven and in Earth*, Mat. 28. 18. *chap.* 24. 30. *John* 17. 2. His firſt coming and appearance was mean, as a man, in the form of a ſervant, as a root out of a dry ground, and his countenance more marred than any mans, *Iſa.* 52. 14. *Iſa.* 53. 2, 3. *Therefore they deſpiſed and rejected him, ſpit on him, reproached him, arraigned, condemned him, crowned him with thorns, and crucified him.* In the ſtate of humiliation he was attended with poor deſpicable Fiſhermen, and a company of weak contemptible Women, not many wiſe or noble, or of the Rulers believed on him. But when he ſhall appear the ſecond time, 'twill be with Power and great Glory, as a King in Triumph, or mighty Monarch. We read that *Agrippa* and *Bernice* with great pomp

me to the place of Judgment, *Acts* 25. 23. So will this great Judge, the Man Chriſt Jeſus come, when attended with innumerable company of Angels, and Ten thouſand of his Saints. *Mat.* 25. 31. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his glory,* Jud. 14. *And* Enoch *alſo, the ſeventh from* Adam, *propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his Saints.* 1 Theſſ. 4. 16, 17. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the Trumpet of God; and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. Then we which are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.*

4. He will come ſuddenly, as a Thief in the night. When Men are ſecure, there will be a cry at midnight. *When the Son of Man cometh, ſhall he find Faith in the Earth?* few or none will believe his coming is ſo near. *Of that day knoweth no man, but my Father only,* ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 24. 36. *Be ye therefore ready, for in ſuch an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh,* Mat.

24.

24. 44. And if thou art a carnal Worldling, or a formal ſleepy Pretender to Chriſt, thou wilt be undone, undone everlaſtingly.

Q. *Why will Chriſt come?*

Anſw. 1. By his Fathers appointment and deſignation, he is ordained Judge of the World. Chriſtian, thy Lord Jeſus is the Lord Judge. *The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son*, John 5. 22. Acts 17. 31. *Becauſe he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath rais'd him from the dead.* God hath highly exalted him, *viz.* above the Grave by his Reſurrection, above the Earth by his Aſcenſion, above the Heaven by his Seſſion at the Father's Right Hand. He ſhall be ſent of God as Judge: Judgment hath not been fully executed in any one Age of the world, *Eccleſ.* 3. 16. 5. 8. That of the old world reſerved a curſed *Cham* in the *Ark*. But the laſt Judgment is called the *Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. 2. 5.

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2. Chriſt's Truth, Faithfulneſs, Affection. obliges him to come, he cannot falſify his word,

...d, *I will come*, ſaith Chriſt; nothing of God's Word ever failed, *Joſh.* 23. 4, 14. Chriſt hath an infinite affection to his little Flock in the world: Love and Pity brought him from Heaven to Earth at firſt, and Love will conſtrain him to return; his going hence, or change of place, hath made no change in Chriſt's heart. When *Lazarus* was ſick and dead, Chriſt muſt come, and raiſe him to life, becauſe he loved him. So alſo all that are dead in the Lord, he will come and raiſe. Believers are Chriſt's Brethren, his Siſter, his Spouſe, he will come for his own Bride. The Bridegroom's departure was not upon a difference, or divorce, he did not leave his Bride with a purpoſe to return no more. When he went to Heaven he left his heart here, and will come to preſent to himſelf a glorious Church. *Joſeph* was ſent before into *Egypt*, to provide for his Fathers Family before they came to him: Jeſus hath made all ready, the Preſence-Chamber is prepared, therefore the Marriage muſt be conſummate, and the Lamb's Wife put into actual poſſeſſion of the everlaſting Kingdom. And it is the true Character of Saints to love, and deſire Chriſt's coming, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Henceforth*

there is laid up for me, a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearing. O how often ſhould Chriſtians look to that Princely Palace from whence Chriſt muſt come, and ſpeak in the language of a ſingular Saint, *O faireſt among the ſons of men, why ſtayeſt thou ſo long away?* O Heaven move faſt, time run away, haſten the Marriage-day; for Love is tormented with delay.

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3. Again, The Saints full Redemption, complete and perfect Salvation, will not be till that day. When your deareſt and affectionate Lord ſhall appear, your joy ſhall be full. Here with *Paul* they complain of their body of death, and ſigh and groan under their burden and bondage. Then their cry will be *Redemption, Redemption.*

Laſtly, Chriſt will come for the Conviction and Eternal Confutation of the Devil and his Inſtruments, who mock at ſerious Piety, and the Doctrine of Chriſt's coming. When Chriſt ſhall appear, their mouths will

be ſtopt, and ſhame and contempt will fall upon them for ever. Here the Tares and the Wheat, the Sheep and the Goats, the fooliſh Virgins and the wiſe are together.

As the Raven and the Dove, the Lion and the Lamb were in the *Ark*, then they ſhall be ſeparated. The Harveſt is the end of the world; the concluſion and end of each Generation of men is as a particular Harveſt, this will be a huge, general, and ultimate Harveſt; the Harveſt brings all the Fruits in the Field of this world to ripeneſs and maturity, bad men will be ripe for ruine, Saints for glory. Then the Reapers and Grain-gatherers will come forth, and every Proprietor takes to his own. *Beelzebub* and his helliſh Train will appear, that have lay'n cloſe and covert, and the bleſſed Angels will come forth alſo. The Reapers are the Angels: The Devil will come, glean, and gather in this Field, and take to his own; and God will take to his own. The Husbandmen have their home-harveſt; Satan hath his home, his houſe, his priſon, and all that have the Devil's mark, muſt be haled to his home: And God's Jewels, and choice Grain, muſt be

gathered and carried to their Fa[illegible] House, and Garner of Glory. God and the Devil will divide the whole world. O how will the Devils roar, cry and exult, when they shall have so great a crop, *viz.* so many millions of Men and Women, they will cry Home, Home; these are mine, and must abide with me in my Prison; then the Devil and his Retinue shall be sent down, down, down to Hell together.

Motive 7. Consider what multitudes of Men and Women are going down the swift torrent of time, which emptieth it self into the lake and gulf of Eternity. Secure Soul open thine eyes wide, and look abroad to see how thick God's deadly Arrows flie, and do execution every day. What various and mortal Diseases are there in the world? Many are sick, weak, dying, and going to their long home. We are posting daily to the shore of Death, and bars of the Pit, and most have their Faces toward the bottomless Pit, and place of endless wo, wretched and sleepy Soul, didst thou stand but one Night or Day at Hell-gate, and

ee what Droves of ungodly men the Devils bring in, it would make thine heart and fleſh to tremble. And didſt thou hear what doleful cryes and skreeks they make as they go down, and what cutting Acclamations and Triumphs the damned Spirits make, when the Maſter Beaſts, the mighty Monarchs and Governors of the world come in, it would be worſe than a Fire in thy bones, or a Sword in thy bowels. Read and dread what the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaith of the King of *Babel*, Iſa. 14 9, 10. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee at thy coming, it ſtirreth up the dead for thee.* But, bleſſed be God, ſome few holy reſolved Souls for Chriſt and Heaven have eſcaped this dreadful danger, and made ready for the Marriage. Sinner, Haſt thou had the ſame means and opportunities, and done nothing: Know, thou haſt but a day for it; ſtay till the day be ended, and thou art loſt for ever. The Servant went out to invite to the Marriage, told the Gueſts all things were ready. *I have finiſhed the Work*, (ſaid Chriſt to his Father) *thou gaveſt me to do.* All things on God's part, on Chriſt's part are ready;

Heaven is ready for thee, if Ch[illegible] formed in thee; Christ is waiting for t[illegible] longing for thee, praying for thee, O then prepare speedily. Thou hast seen the marks and messengers of Death in others Faces, expect thy turn, who may be the next in the Town, City, Parish, or Family, carried to the Grave.

Mo. 8. And last of all, with fear and astonishment, think upon the dismal and dreadful case and end of one that lives and dies, and goes to Eternity unready. Sinner, consider with what anguish, horror, and consternation of spirit men go hence, if awakened and sensible of their doleful, damnable condition. For a man dying, and at the door of Eternity to look backward, and take a view of his cursed, hellish course and practice, and to turn his eyes inward upon his Soul, that is, a polluted Vessel, without the Oil of Grace; and to see nothing but sin, guilt, and all the beastly and impure abomination of heart and life, with his secret Closet-villanies: And to look upward to that Christ, Heaven and Glory, which he hath forfeited by his wil-

ful

penitency, and refusal of mercy: to look downward to the Grave, where his Body must rot, and to those Devils and Reprobates in Hell who must be his Company and Tormentors. This is tremendous, unless thou art like *Judas*, who heard Christ say, *Wo be to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed, it had been better he had never been born.* O who can see such a sight, and not pluck off his hair, and tear his very bowels with rage and indignation, and wish he had never had a being, and a Soul of such inestimable worth, that must die and burn for ever. Was not this the condition of *Francis Spira*, and of another, who said, *She shall go down to Hell alive.* And it may be the case of some other convinced desperate Soul, whom the Lord leaves for terror to the secure world, who be as men hang'd up in Irons in the way to Hell; or as men risen from the dead, to tell others of the vanity and danger of their sinful courses. For a man to look on time past, and see that gone for ever; and look on time present as just come to its period, and his Account not ready, his Lamp gone out, his short Heaven on earth concluded, his Conscience biting and tearing like a

Lion, and ſummoning him to the [illegible] Juſtice, his Body dying, his Paſſing-bell tolling, Curtains drawn, Phyſicians and Friends taking their leaves of him, Sermon, Counſels, Miniſtry, and all means of doing good to Soul or Body ended: the Vault, Tomb or Grave ready to be opened, to receive the filthy Carcaſs. The damned Devils waiting, gaping to receive and carry the Soul down to the dark Dungeon and fiery Lake; and never to have any other company or comforts but wicked Devils, and they inſulting over thee everlaſtingly with helliſh ſpite, and ſtinging exprobation, for neglecting ſo great ſalvation all thy long life, and loſing Heaven for ſome baſe Luſt, Pride and Vanity; O the horror!

Look alſo to Doomſday, and there they ſee and hear the Earth burning, the Elements melting, Stars falling, the Trumpet ſounding, Dead riſing, Kings and Captains, Bond and Free crying out, O Rocks fall on us, O Fire burn us, O Water drown us, O wild Beaſts devour us, O Graves cover and hide us from the wrath of him whoſe blood and bowels we have ſlighted. Will not this awaken?

Sin-

Sinner, Is it ſo? O then come, now Chriſt calls, and do not caſt away mercy, and make thy ſelf miſerable. Refuſe Chriſt and his grace, and whilſt thou liveſt thou art a curſed Creature, and when thou dieſt thou ſhalt be a damned Creature.

What ſayſt thou to this, thou time-loſing and Chriſt-rejecting Wretch? Is there another World, or is there not? Haſt thou a Soul, or no Soul? Is there a bleſſed life of communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt or no? Is it worth the ſeeking after and praying for, or no? Wilt thou reſolvedly ſet about the work of preparing, and not give over till thou art ready for Chriſt, or wilt thou ſit ſtill and do nothing, and leave thine eternal condition at uncertainties? Is it a trifle to thee, or a thing indifferent, whether thou haſt a Chriſt, or no Chriſt? a Heaven, or no Heaven? Whether thou haſt an eternal Felicity above, or eternal Flames below? How will thy ſpirit fail, and thy heart recoil at the ſight and appearance of Eternity.

But if this be a ſcarecrow, or ſome invented Fable, or Dream of a melancholy fancy. Come ſinner, *Let us go down to* Tophet, that is, *in the valley of the ſon of* Hinnom,

and look into the chambers of dar[illegible] and lay thine ear to the door of thine in[illegible]fernal Priſon; and hear what they ſay, whoſe dolorous cryes, and cutting complaints, are enough to rend the hardeſt Rocks. With one voice they roar out and ſay, What we ſee and ſuffer, is the woful and bitter fruit and effect of the ſweet pleaſures of ſin when we were in the world. This is the fire in our boſom, and hot coals that burn us. If the ſpirits in Priſon, and damned in Hell ſhall tell thee, hear what they ſay in their ſeveral complaints, how they cry out of the principal and inſtrumental cauſes of their damnation.

1. My neglect of glorious Goſpel-grace, ſlighting and rejecting ſalvation offered in Chriſt, and putting off Repentance, hath undone my Soul. Chriſt called and knocked at the door of my heart often, but I would not open to him; now he hath ſhut the gate of Mercy on me for ever.

2. My Worldlineſs, Covetouſneſs, Earthly-mindedneſs; I was mad upon the world, this is my wo and utter undoing.

3. My Curſing, Swearing, Lying, Blaſphemy, Perjury, Falſe-witneſs, damn'd my Soul, *Zech.* 5. 4.

4. My

My Frowardneſs, Paſſion, Ambition, Pride, and Haughtineſs, ſent me to Hell.

5. My Unfruitfulneſs, Barrenneſs, Unprofitableneſs under the means of grace was my deſtruction.

6. My indulging the Fleſh in Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, Wantonneſs, Uncleanneſs, ruin'd me. This was the Dart that went through my Liver.

7. My Uncharitableneſs, Hatred, Backbiting, Malice, Envy, Revenge, brought me to Hell.

8. Murder, Theft, Falſe Weights, and Meaſures, cozening Widows, Orphans, eating the bread of wickedneſs, and drinking the wine of violence was my damnation. Murder is a ſin that always bleeds afreſh in the eyes of God.

9. My Stubbornneſs, Wilfulneſs, Diſobedience to my Parents, not hearkning to their Counſels, Admonitions, Reproofs, cauſed me to periſh.

10. My Unrighteouſneſs, Injuſtice, Bribery, Uſury, Oppreſſion, Extortion, deſtroyed my Soul.

11. My enticing, infectious Companions in ſin, and ſecret Night-wickedneſs, was my ruine.

12. The

12. The ill example of my [illegible] School Maſter, Miniſter, Landlord, who I feared and followed for ſome baſe ends, was my undoing.

13. Spending my precious time in vain childiſh Sports, as Hawking, *H*unting, Carding, Dicing, Play-Houſes, when I ſhould have been Reading, Praying, was fatal to my Soul.

14. My irreligious, fooliſh, fond, wicked Parents, who delighted in trimming and adorning my Body, and took no care of my Soul, but let me have my will, and did not reſtrain me, inſtruct and catechiſe me, were my deſtroyers.

15. My marrying and living in ſuch a Family where was no Religion, my being of ſuch a Calling where were ſo many Snares and Temptations, and my Friends ſending me for the gain of the world beyond the Seas, where I had not the means of ſalvation, but wickedneſs and debauchery winked at—laid the foundation of my damnation.

16. My Knowledge, Learning, Parts, (my head being better than my heart) lifted me up, made me forget God, was the Trap and Gin by which the Devil caught my Soul.

17. My

17. My Idleneſs, Sloth, Sabbath breaking, and neglecting the moſt weighty Duties, was my ruine. If I had been as ſerious and diligent in Duties, as often under the Ordinances, and on my Knees, as my Wife or Husband, my Child or Servant, I might have been ſaved.

18. My Greatneſs and Proſperity in the world, as Honour, Offices, Riches, were my ruine; if I had been poor, I ſhould have minded Heaven.

19. My erroneous head, and deluded heart; my hereſie, and diſtractive opinions, caſt me down to Hell. We have a uſeful Book, called, *The Book of Martyrs*; and if a Collection were made of the horrid and prodigious opinions now in *England*, it may be called, *A Book of Monſters*. *Polycarpus* called *Marcion* the Heretick, *The Firſt-born of the Devil*.

Novi te eſſe Primogenitum Satanæ.

20. My Cowardice, Carnal Compliance, Back-ſliding, being willing to ſave my ſtake, hath debauched my Conſcience, and undone me.

21. My truſting to Lamps, common Grace,

Grace, Security, Presumption, Self-r[illegible] ousness, Secret Hypocrisie, brought me to this place of burning.

O what Fools, and how mad were we, who were often told of these things, and this cursed place, and would take no warning! O what a doleful Prison is this, ere we be always dying, and never dead. Here are the chains of darkness, and no light; here is the biting worm of Conscience; here are scorching and devouring Flames; here be all the damned Devils, and is it for ever, for ever? Is there no hope of mercy and deliverance? Are all these yellings, piercing crys, groans, tears, to no purpose? Who, but we in Hell, that drink of the wrath of the Almighty, know the power of his Anger? *O what a fearful and grievous thing it is, to fall into the hands of the living God!* Hebr. 10. 31. Nahum 1. 6. *Who can stand before his indignation? Who can abide the fierceness of his anger?* Poor perishing Soul, Is it nothing to be separated from God, and to be a Fire-brand of Hell for ever? O what a misery is it, that you can make nothing of this, nor fear it, till you see it and feel it.

What if thou shouldest be deprived of all

Senſes and Faculties? Suppoſe thou ſhouldeſt be ſtruck deaf, and never hear more? Dumb, and never ſpeak more? Blind, and never ſee more? Lame, and never go more? Loſe thy Palate, and never taſte more? What if thou ſhould'ſt be deprived of all thy comforts, how could'ſt thou bear it?

If thou ſhould'ſt never ſee the light of the Sun, Moon and Stars more, and never ſee Father, Mother, Wife, Children, and thy own Land more, or never wear Cloaths, put on thine Ornaments, or eat Bread more, would it not ſadden thine heart?

If the Sun ſhould go down in *England*, and never ſhine more; if there ſhould never be a Seed-time, nor Harveſt more, what a wo, with a witneſs, would this be, and pierce a heart of flint? what crying would there be to God to command the Sun to appear and ſhine again?

But O what a miſery is it to be ſhut out from God, *in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore?* Sinner, wilt thou ſay, *Soul, take thine eaſe, and be merry*, when the wrath and vengeance of God hangs over thy head, ready to be poured out upon thee; yea, when there is nothing but a

little

little breath between thee, and [illegible] easeleſs, and remedileſs miſery.

Friend, Thou canſt bear the hearing, reading, and diſcourſe of Hell and Doomſday, and be no more frighted than to look upon a dead Lion, or a painted Fire, but what will the thing it ſelf be? *Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be ſtrong, in the day that I ſhall contend with thee, ſaith the Lord?* Ezek. 22. 14.

If the giving of the Law, with thundrings, lightning and tempeſt, made *Moſes* and all *Iſrael* tremble, O what will the ſtrict execution, and inflicting the utmoſt penalty of the Law upon Soul and Body for ever be?

If Chriſt the Babe of *Bethlehem* was terrible in the Manger to *Herod*, and all *Jeruſalem*, what will his Bar and Throne of Juſtice be?

Is a perpetual baniſhment out of *England* as terrible to ſome Malefactors as death? And doſt thou think it (O careleſs Soul) no great matter to be baniſh'd eternally from Chriſt? *Abſalom* would rather die, than loſe the favour and preſence of his Father *David*; you can hear the Sentence will be, *Depart*, and take no notice of it; but when there ſhall be a general conflagration

all things, and the Earth, Heaven, in a Flame, and the Lord Judge ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Archangel, and the Trumpet of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe, and the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, who ſhall be owned and honoured of Chriſt in the face of the whole world, and ſhall go in with Chriſt. Then a ſeparation from Chriſt will be ſomething, to ſee all the Elect of God come from the *Eaſt*, and from the *Weſt*, and from the *North*, and from the *South*, and ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of heaven, and your ſelves ſhut out. Can you bear ſuch a ſight?

O that you would believe it, and think of it before the day be ended, and the gate of mercy ſhut. Go home and proſtrate thy ſelf before the Lord, that he will make you ready to go in with Chriſt; and if this mighty work be done upon thine heart, O ſtand, and wonder at the infinite love of God, and do as Chriſt bid the man, out of whom he had caſt the unclean ſpirit, *Go home to thine houſe, and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee*, Mark 5. 19.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Means and Directions to make ready to go in with Christ to the Marriage.

Direct. 1. Look as for thy life, that thy beginning in Religion be right: Then are those beginnings hopeful, when the Spirit of God in the Ministry of the Word, or any other means of grace works upon us, so that we be sure to lay a good Foundation at first. An Error at the threshold of the House, or first setting out in the profession and practice of Religion is very dangerous, like a defect in the Foundation, that threatens the fall of the whole Fabrick, like a Leak in the Ship, that endangers the Ship and Men too; or like a flaw in a Man's Deed, that threatens the loss of the whole Estate. There will be a beginning and an end alike, when grace is radicated, and the operation of the Spirit enters deep into the Soul; whereas a child mishapen in the womb, is ever afterwards a Monster.

Quest. *But when is it right?*

Answ. This right beginning may include three things, according to which compare and try your selves.

1. A clear conviction of sin, with an inward conversion to God. 2. A

moſt deliberate, joyful, and cordial ception of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that upon ſuch terms as the Goſpel propounds him unto us, *viz.* with all his commands in his Perſon and Offices.

3. An hearty, total, and unreſerved reſignation and dedication of a man's ſelf to God, with an abhorrency of ſin, and a conſtant reſolution to love God, and to live to him for ever, *Acts* 2. 37, 38. *Chap.* 26. 18. *Luke* 19. 6. *Eſay* 26. 13. 44. 4. *Prov.* 23. 26. 2 *Cor.* 4. 8. What St. *Paul*, that great Apoſtle, preacht, we muſt practice, or no preparation to go in with Chriſt. Repentance is one of the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and called a Foundation, *Hebr.* 6. Soul, thou muſt know the plague of thy heart, and be ſenſible of thine own iniquity, and *look upon him whom thou haſt pierced*, and ſit alone, and keep ſilent, and put thy mouth in the duſt, and mourn like the Doves of the Valley, or no hopes of Heaven. Moreover, this is not a work for one day only, but upon every particular failing you muſt renew your Repentance, and make the Sword of godly ſorrow to go deep into thy Soul. When thou haſt fallen, think with thy ſelf, I have done that now

which will make me guilty of the [illegible] Law, and enough to caſt me out of God's favour for ever: Therefore open the ſore, make confeſſion, and give glory to God; and run to thy Advocate to make peace, and procure thy pardon.

They are all pardoned Penitents, who are prepared to go in with Chriſt.

Direct. 2. Would you be ready to go in with Chriſt, caſt off all incumbrances, and make haſte in your way to heaven: heaven is a glorious Crown, we muſt ſtrip and ſtrain, run and win it; how can a man run with a burthen on his ſhoulders, and fetters on his feet? The Snail is very ſlow in his motion, who carries his houſe on his back: Chriſtian, get the bolts off thy hands, and fetters off thy feet. Caſt out the lading, lighten the veſſel of thy Soul, and prevent thy ſhipwrack. The burthen of worldly cares, the lime-twigs to our wings and affections, and (which ſticks to us as pitch and tarr to the ſides of the Ship) are the bane of many a Soul. The glittering things of the world which ſparkle in our eyes, and attract our hearts, are but like rotten wood,

or

Glow-worms, which ſhine in the dark: *Set not thine heart upon the Aſſes*, ſaid *Samuel* to *Saul*; *Regard not your ſtuff*, ſaid *Joſeph* to his Brethren.

Chriſtians, you are going to Mount *Sion*, value not your moveables. We may carry the world, and the pleaſing objects of it, our Children and Relations in our hands, but not in our hearts. All outward comforts are but like flowers that will wither in our hands, or like dead water which will ſoon putrifie. They are thorns and ſnares to very many:

Licitis perimus omnes.

The world kept the young man out of heaven, who could (as he thought) eaſier keep the whole Law, than part with his Riches. *He was ſad*, 'tis ſaid; why ſo? he had his eſtate, but he would have had the world, and Chriſt too! Thouſands loſe Chriſt and Heaven, to gain the Earth; how doth the love of the world creep into our hearts, where there can be but little room for God and Grace.

Chri-

Christians startle at gross and scandalous sins that look with a black and ugly aspect, as Murther, Adultery, Dumbness, Swearing, Theft; but the world may be welcome, though the immoderate love of the world is as contrary and inconsistent with Grace, as the forementioned sins. Other sins walk naked, this must have a covering, a cloak of covetousness.

Love not the world, keep your hearts above; 'tis below a Christian to love the world, who hath better objects for his love. *Adonijah* must not sit on *Solomon*'s Throne. 'Tis not for Lions and Master-beasts to prey on Mice, nor for Eagles to catch at Flies. The Sons of Princes must not live like Beggars and mean persons.

Christian, do not wring thy hands, nor hang thy wings, though creature comforts withdraw from thee; when there is no water in the Cistern, there is enough in the Fountain. *In my Father's house is bread enough*, said the prodigal Son. *Cæsar* was wont to say, *Cogita te Cæsarem esse*, think thou art *Cæsar*. Horses can trample upon Pearls and Mines of Gold, Birds mute upon Princes Palaces, and shall we set up this clay Idol of Bastards in our hearts, and not the inheri-

ſtance of Sons (as one calls the World) hear what God ſaid to *Baruch*, *Seeſt thou great things, ſeek them not*, Jer. 45. 5.

Chriſtian, Heaven is thy home, the World is but thy Inn, though a Man hath better Diet, better Attendants, better Lodging in his Inn than at home, yet he remembers 'tis but for a night, and he muſt be gone, 1 *Chron.* 29. 15.

Take a view of all your profits, pleaſures, treaſures and comforts of this life, *viz.* husband, wife, children, pearls, rich apparel, ſilver, gold, great friends, large poſſeſſions, offices, honours, ſumptuous buildings, pleaſant walks, upon which thou haſt loſt ſo much labour, time and care, and upon the Arreſt and ſtroke of Death are gone for ever.

One of the Ancients ſtanding at *Cæſar*'s Tomb, he wept, and cryed out, *Where is now the flouriſhing beauty of* Cæſar? *What is become of his Magnificence? Where are the Armies, where is the honour of* Cæſar? *Where are now the Victories, the Triumphs and Trophies of* Cæſar? *Are they all gone and departed?* Chriſtian love that but a little, which thou canſt not love long; Riches reach not to Eternity. *I am going,*

ing, said one, *where money is no current co*

Contemne vivens quæ post habere non potes.

Direct. 3. Be diligent, constant and serious in the use of every known means and practice of every commanded duty: If you will go into heaven hereafter, you must fully follow the Lord here. Christian, with greatest Care and Conscience, practise these Four Duties to make ready for Christ.

1. With love and delight attend the Ministry of the Word, wait on it as the poor man at the Pool for healing, and to hear, that thy Soul may live. *Mary* attending upon the Word, is commended by Christ. *The Gospel* (saith Dr. *Sibs*) *is a Chariot to carry Christ up and down in the World*; resolve to follow this Chariot, be often under the influences of Heaven. that the Sun of Righteousness may let down his warm beams upon you. The Spirit of God, in the Ministry of the Word, hath converted many a Soul, and prepared them for Heaven.

Second-

Secondly, let the holy Sabbath or Lords day be always welcom to thee. *How glad am I*, said one, *when I see the first light of the Lords day*: Inure thy self to the strict observation of that high and holy day of God, keep it as for thy life, that at the end of every Lords day, thou mayest be fit to enter upon an eternal Sabbath: how seasonable and sweet is it when Gods Spirit and our hearts meet in the duties we perform. *I was in the Spirit*, saith *John*, *on the Lords day.*

Three Duties in Religion are very hard, *viz.* 1. To watch the heart. 2. To pray without wandring and distraction? and 3. To keep the Lord's Day well.

3. Be frequent and affectionate in the celebratinn of that most useful and glorious Ordinance the Lord's Supper, by which we must shew forth the Lord's death till he come. And if you would feed on, and feast with Christ in this blessed Banquet, of which Christ is both the Master and the Matter, do three things: First, always come with due Preparation. Secondly, with high Expectation. Thirdly, when come, make application.

4. Be very ſolemn and ſerious in thy Cloſet-Viſits, *viz.* be early and late with God by ſecret Prayer. The great *Roman* Captain *Scipio*, before he undertook any buſineſs, was wont firſt to enter the Capitol; pretending a conſulting with the Gods; ſeveral Miniſters being at a Table where the Queſtion was asked, *What was the beſt Trade*, one anſwered *Begging*, meaning Prayer. Wouldeſt thou be prepared to go in with Chriſt, follow him with unutterable groans from day to day for grace, and fitneſs for Heaven, ſpeak out thine heart before God, as *Hannah* did when ſhe obtained a Son. The voice is not abſolutely neceſſary in Prayer but the heart: It matters not though the door of the lips be ſhut, ſo the cloſet of the heart be open. When thou art going into thy chamber, or come into thy cloſet to bow before the Lord, obſerve theſe Particulars.

1. Search and find out thine heart and ſay, I am going about a great work, to beg grace to prepare me for Heaven, Where art thou my heart?

2. Summon in thine heart; 'tis often

out

of the way, send a word of command after it, and fetch it in.

3. Stir and lift up thine heart; the heart is like a Bell that will make no Musick till it be raised up, like green wood that will not burn without much blowing.

4. Fix thy heart on God to whom thou prayest, and on Jesus Christ in whose Name thou dost it. Should a Man make a suit to the King for his life, and not mind his business? the most High looks upon the heart.

5. Watch thine heart, and look for a return of thy Prayer, otherwise thine heart will give thee the slip, and thy Prayer is lost. Prayer one compares to a chain, one end of which is fastened to the Believers tongue, the other to Gods Ear, who is called a God hearing prayer. Say with *Job*, *I will fill my mouth with Arguments.* When *David* had taken good order for building the Temple, he directs his prayer to God to prepare their hearts.

The *Lacedemonians* had a custom to ask nothing of their Gods, but things of weight and moment. Is not this of

greateſt concernment? Try what prayer can do, plead before God by Ardent and Importunate Prayer to make thee ready, render thy ſelf to God as an undone Creature to new mould, form and faſhion thine heart for himſelf; carry thy heart to him on thy knees, as *Moſes* brought the two Tables of Stone after the firſt were broken and defaced, for God to Write what he Will. Say, Lord, I have heard what a diſmal, dark, dreadful place hell is, and what a bleſſed and glorious place heaven is, and yet I am not prepared for it. This heart of mine I have had on many a ſick bed and ſentence of Death, and under many a Sermon, and ſometimes it hath been ſtartled, and awakned, then I have purpoſed and promiſed to repent, pray, leave my ſins, to part with the World, and to become a new man, but I have acted the hypocrite, all this is come to nothing, Lord do that in me and for me, which none but a God can do.

The bloody child cannot beautifie and adorn it ſelf. The *Ethiopian* cannot change his Skin, nor the *Leopard* his

...ots. The preparation of the heart ...man is from the Lord, *And I have cried day and night before thee*, ſaid *David*.

'Tis ſtoried of a Woman in *Eſſex*, after the Sentence was paſt upon her, ſhe cried ſo earneſtly to the Judge for mercy, that the Judge and Juſtices rebuked her, to whom ſhe replied, *I beſeech you, my Lord, it is for my life*.

Chriſtian, 'tis for Heaven, and the eternal life of thy Soul, therefore be earneſt with God for his Spirit to ſanctifie, and prepare thine heart, which by nature is a filthy polluted veſſel; God can make thine heart as ſoft Wax, and ſtamp his Image on it, but he will be ſought unto. The poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, *Pſal.* 34. 6. *My Prayers* (ſaid *Jonah*) *came in unto thee*, Chap. 2. 7. At that great and dreadful day, when *the Sun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the Moon into blood; whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved*, Acts 2. 20.

Direct. 4. Keep this eye upon God and

thine account, expect every mo[illegible] cry at midnight, and be often thi[illegible] of Heaven and Hell, Death and Judgment; and at the end of every day, reflect upon the precedi[illegible]g actions and passages of it. Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, I have set the Lord always before me, said *David*. Soul, meditate daily on these three things.

1. Think of the great day of an Account.

2. The great Account you are to give.

3. The Just and great Judge to whom the account is to be given. Some have their Houses situate near *Golgotha*, and view the Graves of the dead every day, and do not think of Death and Eternity. *Charles* the first, that Warlike and glorious Emperour of *Germany* resigned his Empire, and liv'd two years retiredly before his death in the company of Religious men, providing for Eternity. Devout soul, if thou wouldst begin with God every morning, and walk with God all day, and lie down with God at night in the Evening, ask thy self these or the like Queries.

1. Q.

1. Q. *How did I awake this morning, with* [illegible] *or the World?*

2. Q. *What hath been the constant Frame of my heart in society, and in my solitude this day?*

3. Q. *Have I bowed twice before the Mercy-Seat this day? and opened my case to God seriously, or have my Closet visits been short and slight?*

4. Q. *What have I done in order to my great account this day? Have my words and actions tended to Gods Glory?*

5. Q. *Have I neglected no opportunity of doing or receiving good this day? who hath bin the better for me this day?*

6. Q. *How have I behaved my self in company, in my calling, and in my family this day?*

7. Q. *How hath my heart bin affected and enlarged in holy Performances, both in secret or my house? Do I habituate my self to holy duties? Is Religion my main business?*

8. Q. *What serious and awakening apprehensions and thoughts of God, Christ, the Spirit, my Soul, Death and Judgement have I had this day?*

9. Q. *Have not I by some sin of omis-*

ſion or Commiſſion, made work for Re[pentance] and Humiliation this day? And is my hea[rt] a melting and mourning frame? Can I offer to God the ſacrifice of a broken heart?

10. Q. *Have I met with Chriſt this day, and have gone one ſtep forward in my way to Heaven? What power have I gotten over my Corruptions and Paſſions? What Grace have I exerciſed?*

Direct. 5. Let it be thy conſtant and greateſt care to keep a good Conſcience in all things; ſtand off from Iniquity; ſee that there be no allowed reigning ſin in thine heart and life; God will know it, whoſe eyes are pure, and in every place. Sinner, it will be bad looking God in the face with a galled, guilty Conſcience, an enemy in thy boſom. *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*, 1 John 3. 19, 20.

Vox Conſcientiæ eſt Vox Dei.

Conſcience is God's Vicegerent in us, and it will be a Friend or a Fury, and cauſe an Hell within, or a Heaven within. 'Tis dread-

dreadful for a man to carry Hell about with him, the evidence of his condemnation in his own breast; whereas the inwitness of a good Conscience, will be as a wall of brass to a Believer. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards.* Keep this Bird of Paradise always in thy bosom, that thine heart may not reproach and smite thee.

A guilty Conscience representeth Death and Judgment dreadful, and terrible to great men, even to Kings the gods of the world. *Richard* III. after the murther of his own two innocent Nephews, had fearful Dreams, insomuch that he did often leap out of his Bed in the dark, and run about the Chamber, even distracted with horror, as if all the Furies of Hell were hanging about him. So *Charles* IX. of *France*, after the bloody Massacre of *Paris*, was so inwardly terrified, that he was every Night laid to sleep, and awakened with a Set of Musicians. Sins against Conscience, are nearest to the Devil's sin. O how astonishing is

this, when a Man dying must say, (if he speaks the truth) I have rebell'd against my Creatour, I have served the Devil, I have satisfied my Lusts, and now I go to Eternal torments.

Therefore forsake thy sins, repent, and get thy conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

Direct. 6. Begin, and for some space continue, that so much neglected duty of consideration, and take the most convenient time and place for it. Do not say of the Work of Heaven, as the *Jews* of the Temple; the time is not come, that time the Lords House should be built. But what said the Lord by the Prophet, is this a time to dwell in cieled houses, and my house is not built? Poor soul, wilt thou sleep and be secure, indulge thy flesh, sin, and pursue the World, and hast made no preparation for thy Eternal habitation! Thus saith the Lord, consider your wayes. Thus saith the Lord of *Hosts*, consider your wayes, *Hag.* 1. 5. 7. This work through the blessing of God

hath been very ſucceſsful. I have heard a very Religious Father dying, made his prodigal ungodly Son promiſe him, after his death to go into his Cloſet, and ſit alone for ſeveral times; which being performed, he at laſt conſidered that his Father did it out of love to his ſoul, that he might not periſh Everlaſtingly, and ſo it was made the means of his converſion. There is another ſtory like unto this, of a Traveller coming to an Inn, where he found a very Beautiful and Witty young woman, but very vain and frothy, when he went from the Inn, he gave her a piece of gold upon Condition, ſhe would ingage, and promiſe to retire into her Chamber, at ſeveral ſeaſons, and upon her knees utter ſuch words before the Lord, Lord thou haſt given me theſe Natural Parts and comly proportion? Is it not pity that ſo Amiable a Creature as thou haſt made me, ſhould be damn'd and burn in hell for ever? And after this ſhe became Sober, Religious, and left the Inn. 'Tis a Character of a true penitent to ſit alone. But if I reſolve and promiſe to go alone, and conſider, what muſt I think of: Ask thy ſelf theſe queſtions.

Q 1. *What was I, when first born into this wretched world? Did I bring any thing that was good with me, to entitle me to, and prepare me for Heaven? Am I not worse now? Have I answered the glorious End of my Creation?*

Q. 2. *O my Soul, Have I not often dared God to damn thee? Is it not a wonder I am now in the world, that so many of my acquaintance and companions in sin are dead, and in Hell, and I not there?*

Q. 3. *Where had I been if I had died when last sick, or when my Husband, Wife, Father, Mother, Brother and Sister died?*

Q 4. *Whom do I resemble, the Holy God, or the Black Devil? Doth not my Practice tell me, I am unfit to stand before God, and to go in with Christ to the Marriage?*

Q. 5. *What Influence hath all the Powerful and Soul-searching Sermons of Death and Judgment I have heard, and all the sicknesses and loss of Friends had upon my heart, and this I have read about Preparation for Heaven? What hatred of sin, what love of holiness, what desire after Christ and Heaven is there in my heart?*

Q 6. *Have I any thing to say or object against Christ, and a holy life? Is it not the way to Heaven, and to secure and save my Soul for ever?*

er? If it be not good to live the life of the Righteous, why did Balaam *desire to die the death of the Righteous? Why should not I be and do that now, which I will wish I had been and done at Death and Doomsday: Are there no Resolutions stirred up in me to a strict and pious course?*

Q. 7. Why are the Company and Prayers of good Ministers and Christians more pleasing to Men dying, (who have liv'd ill) than their Companions in sin? Will the bawdy Songs, Jokes, and hellish Oaths of Swearers, Drunkards, and Adulterers, comfort thee in a departing hour?

Q. 8. Shall not I have a thousand times more cause, when I go hence, to curse the day of my birth, than Job *or* Jeremy, *and wish I had never had a being?*

Q. 9. O my Soul! who art now in a House of Clay, must not thou have another Habitation in a little time, thou art far in thy way towards the eternal world? Why was I born? What have I done? Whom have I serv'd? Whose of right am I? Where wilt thou be my Soul, when out of this vile Body? O Death where wilt thou land and lodge my Soul, in the Region of Darkness, or in the Land of Light? in the Rivers of Life and Joy, or in the Lake and Dungeon

of

of death? Wilt thou bring me to the [illegible] *ſion of God, and Boſom of Chriſt in the New* Jeruſalem, *among the glorious Angels and Saints in eternal Pleaſure and Felicities, or into the dark Vale and Priſon with Devils and Reprobates, to be pained, plagued and tormented for ever.*

Q. 10. *Will the way and courſe I am now in, bring me to Heaven, or will it not? Sit down and conſider, O my ſoul, thy time is ſhort, Death is certain, Eternity is near, thy Work is great, thy Account will be ſtrict, Heaven is glorious, Hell is intolerable, eternal; I muſt be regenerated and prepared in a few days, or all is loſt.*

Direct. 7. Reſolve, love and delight to be that towards God, who ſeeth in ſecret, which thou wouldſt have Men think thou art, or ſpeak and write of thee living and dead. Commune with thine heart, and enquire, Am I a Jew inwardly, or more religious and ſerious in ſhew than in ſincerity. The moſt upright cannot be deceiv'd. To apply this home to thine heart, let me ask thee theſe Queſtions.

1. *What*

1. *What doth thy Conſcience ſay when thou art alone?*

2. *What doth thy Cloſet ſay, or thoſe duties which none obſerveth but God?*

3. *What doth thy Fellow Chriſtians ſay? who are moſt judicious, ſpiritual, and beſt able to diſcern?*

4. *What doth thy Converſation ſay?*

5. *What do thy Family, viz. Wife, Children, Servants ſay?*

Q. 6. *What doth the ſacred Records of the Word ſay?*

Speak Conſcience, ſpeak Cloſet, ſpeak Chriſtians and Neighbors, ſpeak Life, ſpeak Wife, Husband, Children, Servants; ſpeak Law and Teſtimony, Is this Man or Woman ſincere, and fit to go into Heaven with Chriſt? why wouldſt thou be thought that thou art not? When thou art in the houſe of the Grave, wouldeſt thou have this written on thy Tomb or Sepulchre.

Here lieth an Atheiſt, who ſaid in his heart there was no God nor Devil, Heaven nor hell, till he came into hell among the devils.

Here lieth a ſeeming Saint, one that profeſs'd and owned Religion, but was

rotten

rotten and false-hearted, who dece[ived] himself and the world, and lost heaven by his hypocrisie.

Here lieth an Earth-worm, a man that laboured all his life for the world, that would be rich, and raise his Family, though with the ruine of his Soul, and made no preparation for Eternity; he lived and laboured as if Bodies had been immortal, and Souls mortal.

Here lieth an *Heretick* and Blasphemer, whose Opinions caused him to perish.

Here lieth a man that mock'd at holiness, and hated the Preachers, Professors and Practisers of Religion, whose blood he would have shed with all his heart.

Here lieth a Drunkard, a Swearer, a Murderer, a Thief, a false perjured Person, a Liar, a Backbiter, who hurt others, and have undone themselves.

Here lieth a man that had fair opportunities for heaven, but would not improve them; he made no conscience of hearing Sermons, reading and sanctifying the Lord's day.

Here lieth one that had holy Parents, and was piously educated, but he would not hearken to their Reproofs and Counsels, and

tread in their Religious steps, who walk'd in the way to Heaven.

Here lieth a man that lived without God in the World, that neither prayed in his closet nor family.

Here lieth an Apostate, who lost his soul and Heaven by departing from the truth: and his Carnal compliance.

Here lieth a Pharisee, a man hot, zealous, and furious for the form, bark, and suburbs of Religion, and there rested, but never had the Power of it.

Friend, wouldst thou be reputed and counted a good Christian among men, see thou be such a one before God: or wo be unto thee when Christ shall come. The upright shall dwell in his presence, *Psa.* 140. 13.

Direct. 8. Would you go in with Christ, begin the Work of Heaven while in the World, and drive a great Trade for Heaven. Christian, send and search out the holy Land, get a prospect or Pisgah-sight of Heaven, and having tasted this pleasant fruit, press on, possess it. Keep grace in its most lively and vigorous exercise, let it not decline for a World.

True

True grace is perſevering, a ſp[illegible] will never ceaſe aſpiring till it be jo[illegible] with the flame of Eternal glory.

The beſt ſight in *England*, ſaith a Reverend Divine (is to ſee an old profeſſor to grow better and better. Chriſtian, let the ſtream of thy heart be Heavenward: Aſcend the mount of divine Communion every day, and when you are in your private devotions, get your hearts into heaven. Delight in that which muſt be your heaven, *viz.* in the face, and favour of God, *Mat.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart for they ſhall ſee God.* Joh. 17. 24. *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me, for thou lovedſt me before the Foundation of the World.*

Be much in praiſing and bleſſing God. Prayer and thanks are (ſaith one) like the double motion of the Lungs, the Air ſuck't in by prayer is breathed out in thanks. Mercies that come down by prayer, ſhould be returned and aſcend in praiſes.

Moreover keep a conſtant, and ſenſible Communion with Chriſt: Let thine heart go forth to meet him every day, and

every duty, *Pſal.* 63. 8. when Chriſt and the Soul meet in his Ordinances, the Believer may ſay, This is the gate of glory: Communion muſt prepare us for Fruition. *Auguſtus Ceſar* died in the kiſſes of his wife *Livia*: The prepared Soul many times dies in the kiſſes of his dear Lord.

Direct. 9. Carefully diſcharge your Relative Duties, and abound in Acts of Mercy and Charity to all; follow the holy Examples of former Saints, *viz.* Abraham, *Gen.* 18 19 *For I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon him that which he hath ſpoken of him.* *Joſhua*, Joſh. 14. 15. *And if it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the LORD, chooſe you this day whom you will ſerve, whether the gods which your fathers ſerved that were on the other ſide of the flood, or the gods of the* Amorites, *in whoſe land ye dwell, but as for me and my houſe we will ſerve the LORD.* David, *Pſal.* 101, 2, 3, 6, 7. *I will behave my ſelf wiſely in a perfect way, O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my houſe with a perfect heart. I*

will

will ſet no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave to me. Mine eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in the perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me: he that worketh deceit, ſhall not dwell within my houſe: he that telleth lyes, ſhall not tarry in my ſight.

Do your utmoſt to breed and train up your children and ſervants for Chriſt and heaven, and not for the Devil and hell.

Shall God make Inquiſition for the blood of the Body when murdered, and will he not for the blood of a Soul?

Suppoſe when the beloved Child is in the Cradle, or at the Mothers breaſt, the Devil ſhould come, and ſay to the Parent, take this Child and train it up for me; teach it to be proud, to lie, ſwear, ſteal, prophane Gods day, to mock at holineſs, let it have its will, and never reſtrain or correct it; do not put it in mind of God, or catechiſe it while you live. Send this Child early to my Schools, to Alehouſes, Taverns, Comedies, teach it to Card and Dice, and all fleſhly delights, ſports and recreations; this would ſeem dreadful to you: and you would ſay, Get thee behind me, Satan.

O then let every father take the same care as *David* did of his Son *Solomon*, and as *Solomon* did of his son *Rehoboam*. See the pious & Parental Charge of *David*, 1 *Chr.* 21. 9. And *Solomon*, as it's thought, wrote the first eight Chapters of the *Proverbs* for the sake of *Rehoboam*. Let all Parents say, as *Psal.* 34. 11. *Come, ye Children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

But who can say of his children, as one said of *Austin* to his Mother *Monica*, That it was impossible a Child of so many Prayers should perish. Are your children the children of prayers and tears?

Job was careful of his children, who sent and sanctified them after their feasting. The study and care of most Parents is to enrich their children, to leave them ample portions and estates, to make them great and honourable and to provide Husbands and Wifes for them; but to sanctifie and save their souls is not their care.

Happy is that Man, when leaving the World, can say to his children, as old *Jacob*, *I die, but the Lord will be with you.* When God by death removes your near and dear Relations, you are troubled that you were no more serviceable to their souls.

Again,

Again, to your relative Piety add your Almes, draw out your ſouls to the hungry. The poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the Land. *The poor you have always with you*, ſaith Chriſt. Be open hearted and liberal handed to neceſſitous perſons, but eſpecially to Gods poor. This duty is coſtly, but it will be comfortable. The Apoſtle calleth it, *A good foundation againſt the time to come.* And Chriſt will publickly acknowledge, and take all that is done in his Name to his Miniſters and Members as done to himſelf, *Mat.* 25. 45. 1 Tim 6. 18, 19.

Direct. 10. Laſtly, would you go into Heaven with Chriſt, labour to live like him here, who hath left us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps. Chriſtians, in all things imitable we muſt imitate Chriſt. His natural actions, his occaſional actions, his miraculous and mediatory actions we are not to imitate, but his moral and religious actions we muſt imitate. 'Tis recorded of the *French* Men,

, that they are wonderfully pleased with whatsoever is said or done by their Kings, whom they love to resemble. Their Song is,

Mihi placet quicquid Regi placet,

Whatsoever pleaseth the King, pleaseth me. The disciples and subjects of Christ the King of Saints must follow him, as *Jonathan*'s Armour-bearer did his Master, as the Jews did the cloudy Pillar, as the *Israelites* did their Captain *Joshua*, who led them into *Canaan*, as the wise men did the Star which brought them to Christ. The life of Christ is a Copy without a blot or any uneven letter in it; *And every one that saith he abideth in him, must so walk even as Christ walked*, 1 Joh. 2. 9. The life of Christ is a Christians Bible to read in, his Glass to dress himself by, his Compass to sail by, his Touchstone, to try himself by; And he that professeth faith in Christ must follow Christ. God hath appointed us to be conformable to the Image of his Son, *Rom.* 8. In these twenty Particulars I have drawn forth the Life of Christ. Look every day upon this unparallel'd Picture for your imitation.

First,

1. You must imitate your dear blessed Redeemer in his meekness and patience, *Isa.* 53. 7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth: he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth*, Jam. 1, 4. *But let Patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

2 Imitate Christ in his Humility and infinite Condescension, who though he was the highest, became the lowest, *Mat.* 11.29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls*, Phil. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better then themselves; Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others; Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*, John 13. 14, 15. *If then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one anothers feet: for I have given you an example, that ye shall*

do

I have done to you. Pride, ſaith a Reverend Divine, *is the part of the Devils Image in man.* And ſo filthy a Weed, (ſaith another) that nothing will thrive near it.

3. Imitate Chriſt in his univerſal compliance with his Fathers Will, both in his Active and Paſſive Obedience. John 5. 30. *I can of mine own ſelf do nothing: as I hear, I judge, and my Judgement is juſt, becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath ſent me.* Chap. 6. 38. *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me.* Luk. 22. 42. *Saying, Father if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me: nevertheleſs not my will, but thine be done.*

4. Reſemble Chriſt in his kindneſs unto and prayers for his Enemies. Luk. 22. 50, 51. *And one of them ſmote the ſervant of the high Prieſt, and cut off his right ear. And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.* Luk. 23. 34. *Then ſaid Jeſus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

5. Imitate Chriſt in his conformity to and diligent Attendance upon Gods holy Ordinances, and Inſtitutions. Luke 4.

16. *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as his custome was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.* Lu. 12. 16. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the Disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?*

6. Imitate Christ in his tenderness of sin, whose Innocency was attested by his Enemies, and he acquitted by his Judge. Joh. 8. 46. *Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* Chap. 14. 30. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me.* chap 19. 4. *Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*

7. Imitate the Lord from heaven in his contempt of the World, and the Honours of it, Mat. 12. 15, 16. *But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all. And charged them that they should not make it known.*

8. Imitate your deareſt, and sweeteſt Lord in heavenly mindedneſs, whoſe heart

was

Heaven while he was upon the Earth, John 16.28. *I came forth from the Father, & am come into the World*: again, *I leave the World, and go to the Father*. Chap. 17.5. *And now O Father glorifie thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the World was.*

9. Imitate your Lord and Master, in his wonderfull self-denial. Mat. 16.24. *Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.*

10. Imitate your blessed Redeemer in his burning Zeal for Gods glory. John 2.17. *And his Disciples remembred that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*

11. Imitate your holy Lord in his subjection to, and care of his Parents. Luke 2.51. *And he went down with them, and came* to Nazareth, *and was subject unto them*: John 19.26, 27. *When Jesus therefore saw his Mother, and the Disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his Mother, Woman behold thy Son. Then saith he to the Disciple, behold thy Mother. And from that hour that Disciple took her unto his own home.* Eph. 6.1, 2, 3. *Children obey your Parents*

in the Lord: for this is right. Honour father and mother,(which is the first commandment with promise.) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the Earth.

12. Imitate your compassionate Saviour in his sympathizing with his disconsolate and afflicted friends, and do what you can to relieve, and comfort them. John 11. 33. *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled.* Col. 3. 12. *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, Holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.*

13. Imitate Christ in his carefulness to maintain the Truth, witness his most strict Exposition of the Law, *Mat.* 5. his disputing with the Doctors, and his confuting of the *Sadducees*, *Luke* 2. 46. *And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them Questions.* Mat. 22. 34. *But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.* Contend earnestly for the faith.

14. Imitate your Lord Jesus in his Wisdom

...n and Prudence, to avoid the ...ching, entrapping, enſnaring Queſtions of his ſubtil, malicious enemies, *Luke* 20.26. *And they could not take hold of his words before the people, and they marvelled at his Anſwers, and held their Peace,* John 8. 3, 4, 5, 6. *And the Scribes and Phariſees brought unto him a Woman taken in Adultery, and when they had ſet her in the midſt, they ſay unto him, Maſter, this Woman was taken in Adultery in the very act. Now* Moſes *in the Law commanded us, that ſuch in the Law ſhould be ſtoned: but what ſayeſt thou? This they ſaid, tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him. But Jeſus ſtooped down, and with his Finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not,* Pſal. 39. 1. *I ſaid I will take heed to my wayes, that I ſin not with my tongue: I will keep my Mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me,* Prov. 19. 3. *He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life.*

15. Imitate Chriſt in his Truth and Faithfulneſs to God and Man; And ſee that you who ſeem religious be juſt and righteous, ſpeak every Man the truth to his Neighbour. 1 Pet. 2.22. *Who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his*

Mouth, Epheſ. 4. 25. *Wherefore putting lying, ſpeak every Man truth with his Neighbour, for we are members one of another.*

16. Imitate your Lord in ſecret duties, particularly in Cloſet-prayer. Mar. 1. 35. *And in the morning riſing up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed.* He continued all night in prayer to God. *Luk.* 6. 12. Mat. 6. 6. *But thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut the door, Pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.*

17. Imitate your Lord and Maſter in his religious care of his Family, his Diſciples, in praying with them, and for them, and teaching them to pray, inſtructing of them, and expounding the Parables to them. Luke 11. 1. *And it came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceaſed, one of his Diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as* John *alſo taught his Diſciples.* Mar. 14. 38. *watch ye and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation: The ſpirit truly is ready, but the fleſh is weak Mar.* 4. 34. *And when they were alone he expounded all things unto his Diſciples.*

Imitate

Imitate Christ in his thankfulness to his Father for mercies of all kinds, Mat. 15. 35. 36. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven Loaves and Fishes and gave thanks, & brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.* 1 Th. 5. 18. *In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

19. Imitate your dear Lord in redeeming the golden opportunity of time, John 9. 4. *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no Man can work.* Eph. 5. 16. *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

20. Lastly, Imitate Christ in his publique spiritedness in his whole course, who went about doing good to all with whom he had to do, *Mat.* 4. 23. *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues, and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.* Acts 10. 38. *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost, and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil: for God was with him.*

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18. Imitate Christ in his thankfulneſs to his Father for mercies of all kinds, Mat. 15. 35. 36. *And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the ground. And he took the ſeven Loaves and Fiſhes and gave thanks, & brake them, and gave to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the nultitude.* 1 Th. 5. 18. *In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you.*

19. Imitate your dear Lord in redeeming the golden opportunity of time, John 9.4. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me while it is day: the night cometh when no Man can work.* Eph. 5. 16. *Redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.*

20. Laſtly, Imitate Chriſt in his publique ſpiritedneſs in his whole courſe, who went about doing good to all with whom he had to do, *Mat.* 4 23. *And Jeſus went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues, and Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſes among the people.* Acts 10. 38. *How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the holy Ghoſt, and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil: for God was with him.*

O what rare and singular Saints we be, if we did every day write after this Copy! Christians, is Christ your Head, and you his mystical Body, how monstrous and incongruous is it to see a deformed, Leprous body, joyned to a most beautiful comly Head. You hope to go in with Christ, therefore purify your selves even as he is pure. The Sons of *Constantine* the great wholely put on their Father, whom they did exactly resemble, (saith *Eusebius*) Will you bewail your unlikeness to Christ, and now look often upon his Picture. 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

A certain Duke of *Bavaria*, each morning used to call his servant to bring him water in a Bason, in the Bottom whereof was stamped in gold the picture of *Cato Major*, that so he might cause the Impression of his Image to be fixed in his mind, the imitation of whose vertues he had prudently proposed for his practice. Do you often look to the Image of Christ, represented in the Glass of the Scriptures, and let his Vertues, Graces, and exact Conversation be proposed

posed by you for your imitation. Oh how apt are we to miss the mark to go down the stream, and over the hedge daily. It's no less a miracle to be kept from the sins of the World whilst we live in it, than for those three Worthies not to be burned when in the fiery Furnace. We among the tents of the uncircumcised are as in an infected Pesthouse, we cannot live nor breath, but must suck in this Pestilential Air. *Egypt* was not fuller of *Frogs* and *Lice* in every Chamber, in every hole, than the World is of sins, snares, and temptations; for prevention whereof, furnish your selves with divine precepts, and set before you the best patterns of Piety: Methinks I hear the Lord Jesus from heaven, say to every Christian and professour in the World, as *Gideon* to his Souldiers, *Look on me, and do likewise*, *Jud.* 7. 17. Go in Christs steps, and you shall certainly partake of his grace, and glory. John 13. 15.

SECT. X.

The fifth Use is of comfort to those who are prepared to go in with Christ.

Christian, why weepest thou? Why is thine heart grieved? Why is thy countenance sad? Thou art to go in with Christ, where is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. Say why art thou cast down, Oh my soul; go thy way, eat thy bread, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, *Col.* 9. 7. *Ps.* 42. 5. Here are four great grounds of comfort: If we consider,

1 What you shall go in from, and leave behind.

2. Who you shall go in with.

3. What you shall go into.

4. The duration and perpetuity of it.

First, in general you shall go in from, and leave behind every thing that is afflictive, and grievous to you. When *Elijah* went to heaven, he left his Mantle behind him: So when Christians go in with Christ they shall be perfectly, and perpetually exempted from all sinful, and penal evils both of soul and body.

Secondly In particular, 1. You shall be freed from all the defects, deformities, and superfluities of the body. There will be no dim or sore eyes, no feeble knees, trembling hands, bald heads, crooked backs, broken bones; no Wens, Warts, Wounds, Cancers,

...ers, Fistulaes, Scars, or any bodily blemish.

2. You shall be perfectly, and for ever free from all your bodily toil, pain, labour, with which the lives of many of Gods people have been made bitter. Some get a little bread have bin labouring at the very Fire others grinding at the Mill, some digging in the Mines, others casting up of Ditches, some spinning at the Tourn, others weaving at the Loom, and threshing in the Barn, and carrying heavy burdens, and many of them have been servants to cruel hard Masters, like *Israel* under their Task-masters: This will be the Jubilee and year of the Lords Release.

3. You shall be freed from all your anxious, vexing and tormenting cares and perplexities, about your carnal and bad relations, as husbands, wives parents, children, friends, estates, law-suits, debts, ill neighbours, *&c.*

4. You shall be freed from all your sighs, complaints, groans rising from within or from without. *Abraham* shall no more complain for the want of an Heir, nor *Rachel* of her Barrenness, nor *Rebeckah* of the Daughters of *Heth*, nor *Jacob* of his

lost

loſt *Joſeph*; *David* ſhall not [illegible] of his treacherous familiar friend, nor his rebellious ſon *Abſalom*, or of being in the Tents of *Kedar*, the Song of the Drunkard. There ſhall be no grieving thorn, or pricking briar, or a *Canaanite* in the Houſe of the Lord, neither ſhall they be ſenſible of hunger, or cold, or nakedneſs, any more for ever.

5. You ſhall be freed from all your weakneſſes, ſickneſſes, and all diſeaſes whatſoever. There ſhall be no more Ague, Feaver, Gout, Stone, Strangury, Spleen, Scurvey, Conſumption, Dropſies and Lethargies, *&c.* The cauſe of all this will be removed. There will be neither an aking head nor ſinful heart.

6. You ſhall be freed from all your pain & travel, through cold, dirt, winds, ſtorms, and other difficulties, to come at the Word and Ordinances of God, and from all your deadneſs and wearineſs in duties, which is the grief and ſorrow of your ſouls.

7. You ſhall be perfectly freed from all your fears, corruptions, temptations, deſertions and doubts, about your ſouls and Heaven. The Spouſe will never ſay,

Her

loved is withdrawn and gone from ... *Job* ſhall never feel the poiſoned Arrows within him more. *David* will never ſay, *Save me, O Lord, for the Waters are come in upon my Soul; Mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.* The believer ſhall never be heard to ſay or wiſh, O that I knew the work of grace in me were true and ſaving, that God's heart were towards me, and that my heart were truly ſet on God. Then all their deſires ſhall be ſatisfied, all their fears removed, all their doubts reſolved, all their Prayers fully anſwered, and all their Graces perfected: and each Saint ſhall come to the fulneſs of the ſtature of the Gift of Chriſt. When *Moſes* was in the Mount he came ſhining down. Surely, the prepared Chriſtian ſhall go ſhining in, when clad with the Robe of Chriſt's glorious Righteouſneſs. The Bodies and Souls of believers ſhall be as *Adam*, when the Crown of Original Righteouſneſs was ſet upon his head; The Body will be in its perfect ſtrength, and (as ſome think) as it was between thirty and forty years; and the Colours ſo rare, freſh, bright and tranſparent, that all the Veins and Nerves

will

will be discerned, and so full of [illegible] and agility, as it shall be able (saith *Luther*) to toss the greatest Mountain as a Ball. The Apostle speaking of the glory of the Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection, saith, *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it's sown in weakness, it is raised in power,* 1 Cor. 15, 42, 43. The same Apostle affirmeth, *That their vile bodies shall be made like unto Christ's glorious Body.* Then shall each Saint shine brighter than the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father for ever and ever.

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2. It is very comfortable to reflect upon the persons that shall be Co-partners with you of this glory, who shall go in with Christ to the Marriage. We read *Psal.* 45. of the Queen in Gold of *Ophir*, the King's Daughters, and honourable Women, the Virgins thy Companions, which with gladness and rejoycing shall be brought, they shall enter the King's Palace. That numberless number of sealed ones, *Rev.* 7. 9. and great Assembly, and first-born, which are written in Heaven,

many

of which you have known, ſhall go in with you. Thoſe that have gone to the Houſe of God with you, faſted, mourned, prayed with you, thoſe that have ſuffered with you, and who have heard the Word, and received the Lord's Supper with you, and all that have died in the Lord, and gone to Heaven before you.

All the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs, Miniſters, (*viz.*) your godly Paſtors, godly Parents, godly Husbands, godly Wives, godly Children, godly Servants, godly Neighbours, whom ye have not ſeen many years, ſhall go in with you.

Is not this comfortable? Chriſtian, thou ſhalt ſee *Adam* the firſt Man, that God made, and *Abel* the firſt Martyr, *Enoch* that walked with God, and was tranſlated: Thou ſhalt ſee *Noah* that was in the Ark, and ſaved from the Flood, and *Lot* who lived in *Sodom*, whoſe righteous Soul was vexed with their uncleanneſs. Thou ſhalt have the ſight of *Abraham*, who offered up his Son, and *Joſeph* who was ſold into *Egypt*: Thou ſhalt ſee *Jacob* who wreſtled with the Angel, and got the bleſſing: Thou ſhalt ſee *Moſes* the

great

great Prophet that was in the Mount, brought down the Law to the People, and *Aaron* the High Prieſt, and *Joſhua* who went with the People into *Canaan*, and *Samuel* who miniſtred to the Lord when he was but a Child, thou ſhalt ſee *Sampſon* who pulled down the Houſe upon the *Philiſtians*, and *David* the Man after God's own heart, who ſlew *Goliah*; and *Solomon* that built the Temple, and the reſt of the godly Kings of *Judah*. Thou ſhalt alſo ſee the three Children that were caſt into the fiery Furnace, and *Daniel* that was caſt into the Den of Lions. Thou ſhalt ſee *John* the Baptiſt that was the fore-runner of Chriſt, and *Paul* that was be-headed for Chriſt, and *Peter* that was crucified for Chriſt, and the good Women that miniſtred to him, and ſtood by him in his ſufferings, and *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, who begged his ſacred Body, and put it in his Sepulchre. Thou ſhalt ſee the bleſſed Virgin in whoſe Womb he was conceived; Thou ſhalt ſee *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, *Latimer*, and many faithful Miniſters and Chriſtians, who were burned and died for the truth in the *Marian* days. Here is a bleſſed time indeed, to go in with all thoſe,

and

who can tell how many more, who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, 1 *Thes* 4.

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3. What they shall go into is unspeakable joy to reflect upon.

First, to the publick Consummation of the Marriage, that is to be between the King's Son and the King's Daughter, Christ and the Church, *Rev.* 19. What a consort will this be to the Daughters of *Zion* to behold King *Solomon*, *i. e.* Christ, in the day of his Espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. Here we see but at a distance, and through a Glass darkly, then face to face, we shall see him as he is, and behold his glory, 1 *Cor.* 13.9, 10, 11, 12. 1 *Joh.* 3.2. *Joh.* 17.24. The Queen of *Sheba* took a great Journey to behold the glory of *Solomon*, which did transport her with wonder, what will the sight of Christ's Person and Glory do.

Secondly, they shall be openly owned and acknowledged by Christ, when he is exalted above all: For a King to manifest signal respect to some of his Subjects and Favourites on his Marriage or Coronation day, is an high honour.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, they ſhall be enthroned, crowned with Chriſt, yea, ſit down with him in his Throne, *Rev.* 3. 21. and if there were ſuch ſhouts, joy, ſinging and triumphs, when *Solomon* was on the Throne, that the very Earth did rent with the ſound of them, 1 *Kings* 1. 39, 40. O what will there be when the Saints ſhall be on the Throne-Royal, to judge the World! And if there is joy among the Angels at the Converſion of one ſinner, what acclamations and Triumphs will be among the Angels, at the Coronation of ſo many Saints! There was great joy when *Joſeph* and his Brethren met in *Pharaoh*'s Court, what Joy will there be when Jeſus and Believers ſhall meet above the Clouds, and in their Father's Houſe!

Fourthly, they ſhall go into the very Preſence of God, and have the full Viſion of him, to ſee his eternal Records, Counſels and Decrees that have been concealed ſo long. Then it will appear what they ſhall be. Believers, Chriſt's Spouſe will never fully underſtand her dignity and greatneſs till ſhe come to God.

Candala Queen of *Panemia* ſometime ſaid to the *Venetians*, for her Royal Entertainment,

That she never knew her self to be a Queen, till she came to their Territories. The same may Saints say, when they come to the upper Regions and Mansions of glory.

Lastly, 'Tis strong consolation to consider the duration of the joys and happiness of the Saints in Heaven, which will be without any Intermission, Succession or Conclusion. To go into the new *Jerusalem*, that needeth no light of the Sun, Moon nor Stars, and to be with God, Christ, Angels and Saints for ever, will be incomparable joy; St. *Paul* affirmeth, *That Believers shall be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thes. 4. 17, 18. 'Tis said of that holy Man Mr. *Ward*, That being in the midst of a Dinner, and the People wondering what he was musing about, he presently brake out, *For ever, for ever, for ever*, for almost a quarter of an hour he could not be still'd, but cried out, *For ever, for ever, for ever.*

To Conclude, Christian, speedily get an assurance of Faith, that thou mayst come to a victorious Conclusion against the strength of doubts, whereby thy pure mind

mind may be aſcertained, perſwa[ded] upon good ground ſetled in the beli[ef] going in with Chriſt.

I ſhall ſhut up all in a few Queries.

1. Q. *Sinner, canſt thou believe that thoſe only who are prepared, ſhall be for ever with Chriſt, and not one more.*

2. Q. *Haſt thou done as God commanded* Hezekiah *at his Summons for Death? Set thine Houſe in order, diſpoſe of thine Eſtate, and laid no foundation for thy Wife, Children, Friends, Relations, to quarrel when thou art Dead, and laid in thy Grave?*

3. Q. *Shalt thou leave a good ſavour behind thee whenever thou goeſt hence, and is there any juſt cauſe for any* Shimei *to Curſe, or Dog to bark at thee?*

4. Q. *Dareſt thou own all that thou haſt gotten before the great and dreadful Judge, and ſay as* Samuel, 1 Sam. 12. 3, 5. *Whoſe Ox have I taken, whoſe Aſs have I taken, or whom have I defrauded. And he ſaid, The Lord is witneſs that you have not found ought in my hand: Is there no Man, Orphan, or Widow wronged, or Debts contracted and not paid?*

5. Q.

5. Q. *Hast thou carried thy self like a Christian in thy Calling, Office and Relation, and entail'd a blessing upon thy Estate and Family? Where is the Man or Womans Child or Servant, that can rise up and call thee blessed, or cordially bless God for thy Example, Company, Counsel?*

6. Q. *What hast thou done for the Church of Christ, his Honour, Interest, Ministers and afflicted Members? Have they been the better for thee or thine Estate? Great Receipts will have a great Account.*

Lastly, If the cry at Midnight should now sound in thine Ears, Art thou ready for the Marriage? Mr. Bolton *dying, told his Children,* That none of them should dare to meet him at God's Tribunal in an unregenerate estate? The reason is in the Text, O, let it never, never be forgotten, that those that were ready went in with him to the Marriage, and the door was shut.

FINIS.

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